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MEMORIALS OF THE MINISTRY

OF THE

REV. ALEXANDER CUMMING.

FEB 1982

Alex Cummings

REV

WITH PORTRAIT

EDINBURGH
ANDREW ELLIOT, PRINCES
MDCCLXXXV

Alex Cumming

MEMOIR

OF THE LATE

REV. ALEXANDER [illegible]

WITH PORTRAIT

EDINBURGH

ANDREW ELLIOT; AND LINDSAY

GLASGOW [illegible]

MEMORIALS

OF

The Ministry

OF THE

REV. ALEXANDER CUMMING,

LATE OF VICTORIA FREE CHURCH, GLASGOW:
FORMERLY OF DUNBARNEY.

WITH PORTRAIT.

EDINBURGH:
ANDREW ELLIOT, 17 PRINCES STREET.
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MEMORIAL SERMON:

PREACHED IN VICTORIA FREE CHURCH, GLASGOW,
ON SABBATH, 9TH JANUARY, 1881,
BY THE REV. ROBERT GILCHRIST, SHOTTS.

"Remember them . . . who have spoken unto you the Word of God: whose faith follow."

Memorial Sermon.

"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."—JOHN xi. 11.

BETHANY lay at the foot of the Mount of Olives, on the east, and there was the happy home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus—two sisters and an only brother. There Jesus had often found rest and refreshment, yet it was appointed that sickness should enter that hallowed abode. When the sickness actually came, Jesus was absent. All the steps of Jesus were prescribed to Him by His Father, and it was ordained in the wisdom of God that while Lazarus was sick in Bethany, Jesus should be on the other side of the Jordan. The two sisters thought it would be enough to send Jesus word, saying, "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick." But it was the purpose of God that the sickness should run its course, and that Lazarus should die. "When Jesus had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was."

The natural impulse of a friend, on receiving such a message, would have been to fly on the wings of the wind to the bedside of the dying friend; but Jesus controlled this natural impulse. Jesus was a physician, but He was not an ordinary physician. He allowed His patient to die in order to fulfil great and glorious purposes, in obedience to His Father's will. When Jesus heard that Lazarus was sick, He said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

It does not appear that any one ever died in the presence of Jesus, or that He ever attended a funeral procession to the grave. He once met a funeral procession, and arrested it. It was the funeral of the only son of the widow of Nain. "When He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother." There is a law of comeliness to which God looks. "Holiness becometh His house." And it would

not have been comely that any one should die in the presence of the Prince of Life. The sisters knew this; for they each said to Jesus, in turn, after He did come, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

Jesus was absent when the sickness prevailed, but He knew all as if He had been there. He sympathised with the sufferers, and when the change came He said to His disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth."

"OUR FRIEND."—In true friendship there is an outgoing of pure affection. Lazarus was the friend of Jesus and of His disciples. They knew it: they had seen it. And Jesus and His disciples were friends of Lazarus. There were outgoings of affection from them to him still. Jesus was the great Friend. He loved him from eternity, or ever the earth was. He came into the world for him. He gave him His Spirit and His personal fellowship, and He was soon to lay down His life for him. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

The disciples also loved Lazarus, like Christ and with Christ. When Jesus was the Friend, of course all the disciples were friends also. It was a small circle then, the circle of Christ's friends: it is a large circle now, and it is ever enlarging. Jesus taught His disciples to say, "Our Father, which

art in heaven." What a privilege to look up and acknowledge our Father there! Jesus joins Himself with His disciples in saying "Our friend" of one who was in the grave. He acknowledges him there. That word "our" is a golden clasp that binds all the disciples, whether we wake or sleep, into "the bundle of life with the Lord."

"Our friend." They love him still. Their friendship did not "die with him." They continue to love him after death. Christ's love is from everlasting to everlasting; and the disciples' love continues. Nay, I think the disciples' love is warmer, or, at least, that they are more conscious of it, and that it is stirred into more vigorous exercise than before. Often when "our friend" is with us, love is dormant; when "our friend" sleepeth, love awakes.

The disciples of Jesus loved your late pastor. When giving an account of the Revival of 1839–40, Mr John Milne, minister of St. Leonard's, Perth, said of Mr Cumming, his fellow-helper in the work: "His preaching and his conversation were much blessed, and his name is very dear to the hearts of our people." It was so in Perth, and it was so in Glasgow also. His name was very dear to the hearts of God's people, and it is dear to us still.

"Our friend." This implies that he is living

still. Jesus claims him, and "He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him."

"Our friend." This implies also that He is loving. He is a friend. There were still outgoings of affection from Lazarus to Jesus and His disciples. I think the soul of the departed believer would turn with a peculiar ardour of affection to the earth; for Jesus was here. He would say with the Psalmist: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee."

Christian friendship is a relationship that outlasts death. There are many relationships that are dissolved by death; for example, the relationships of husband and wife, master and servant, pastor and people. But, underlying these relationships, there may be that which death cannot dissolve—namely, friendship in Christ. Mr Cumming still continues to be "our friend," and I cannot doubt but there are outgoings of sanctified affection from him to this congregation and this great city, for which he so frequently and so fervently prayed.

Abraham was honourably distinguished in the Old Testament dispensation by being called the friend of God: "But thou, Israel, art my servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham my friend." John the Baptist, the forerunner of

Jesus, standing in the morning light of the new dispensation, alludes to himself as the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth Him, and rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice. Jesus, further on, calls all His disciples friends: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John xv. 15).

How blessed it is to be a friend of Jesus! You enjoy His affection and His fellowship. You possess His confidence and the knowledge of His will. You stand among the most honourable company of the redeemed, in communion with the apostles and prophets and martyrs; yea, with all the godly of every generation. You are of the seed-royal. You are made kings and priests unto God. You have the Spirit of God in you, and the beauty of the Lord upon you. Oh, how desirable it is to be a friend of Jesus!

You must either be a friend or an enemy. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither, indeed, can be." "Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."

How may one know if he is a friend of Jesus? 1. You will delight to hear Him speaking. The words of His mouth will be sweeter than honey to your mouth. 2. You will keep His words. You will lay them up in your heart and practise them in your life. "Ye are my friends," said Jesus, "if you do whatsoever I command you." 3. You will be a friend to His cause, to His church, and to His people; and you will receive them into your house and into your heart, as Lazarus did. 4. It will grieve you to hear any one speak lightly of Jesus, and in proper time and place you will confess your supreme love to Him. And 5, you will cultivate His fellowship. By these marks you may know whether or not you are a friend of Jesus. If you have these evidences with any degree of clearness, others also will take knowledge of you, that you have been with Jesus.

How may any one become a friend of Jesus? By accepting the means of reconciliation which He hath provided—His blood to cleanse you, His righteousness to cover you, and His Spirit to sanctify you. God is willing to be reconciled: all the unwillingness is on man's part. "I would, but ye would not." God is friendly, and at the cost of Christ's death He hath provided the means of reconciliation. "God is in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their

trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." Be ye reconciled to God, then ye are friends of God.

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DECEASED BELIEVER.—"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." The death of the saints is sleep in the language of heaven. Jesus said of Jairus' daughter, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." When the martyr Stephen had cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge, he fell asleep. Paul, in 1 Cor. xv., said, "If there be no resurrection, then they which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." But there is a resurrection. Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that sleep. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." "The death of the saints is sleep in the language of heaven, but such is the slowness of men's apprehension, that Scripture often has to descend to our sadder style of discourse"—John xi. 12–14, and Matt. xvi. 11.*

* Bengel.

Beautiful is the believer's sleep, and its beauty is sometimes spread upon the features of the dead, so that, looking upon the sweet expression of the face after death we say, He is not dead, but sleepeth.

> "Asleep in Jesus, blessed sleep,
> From which none ever wakes to weep."

It is like the sleep of a Saturday evening. Our week's work is done, and we are weary. We sleep, and we awake in the morning, and it is the Sabbath! These Scripture promises belong as truly to this as to natural sleep. "When thou liest down thou shalt not be afraid; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet." "They shall dwell safely in the wilderness, and sleep in the woods."

This sweet sleep is often in beautiful contrast to the suffering that goes before. It is the common lot of men, from which the saints of God are not exempted, that sickness and suffering, sometimes severe suffering, precedes death. The soul and the body, so closely connected and so long associated, are not separated without a pang. In some cases there are such paroxysms of suffering that it is a great relief to the sympathising friends and onlookers when they see the beloved sufferer at rest, especially when they can say, "He giveth His beloved sleep" (Ps. cxxvii. 2).

This sleep, this quiet rest, is in affecting contrast to the activities of a previous ministry. The eyes that beamed on us with fatherly affection and tenderness are now closed. The hands that were put forth in labours of love are now withdrawn. The feet that hasted on messages of mercy are now still. The lips that uttered gracious words of mellow tone are now silent; and the heart that breathed out fervent prayers and intercessions for us at the throne of grace is now cold in death. Blessed be God, the great Intercessor Himself still lives and prevails!

There is an important difference between the death of Lazarus in Christ's lifetime on earth and the death of the believer now. The believer, on entering into heaven now, will find what Lazarus did not, and could not find, Christ in His glorified humanity upon the throne. It was not so desirable to die during Christ's lifetime on earth as it is now that He is in heaven. Christ is the great attraction, and it was hard to go away from Him. Lazarus in dying went away from Christ: the believer in dying now goes to be with Christ. The dying thief, who became acquainted with Christ upon the cross, would not have been so willing to die before Christ as after Him. Accordingly it was arranged by God that Jesus should die first. After His departure, death would be welcome to

the penitent, for he was going that day to be with Christ in Paradise.

What will it be to meet Christ in glory! Mr Cumming beautifully anticipated this in a conversation with a young believer, David M'Donald, at the gates of death, or rather, I should say, at the gates of Paradise. The conversation turned on the words of Christ in Luke xii. 37—"Blessed are those servants whom the lord, when He cometh, shall find watching: verily, I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them."

It was remarked by Mr Cumming, "that Bunyan, in the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' does not venture to describe the meeting of Christian and Hopeful with Christ, as they enter the New Jerusalem. They are said to give in their certificates, or to exhibit the evidences of their union to the Saviour, and then to obtain ingress into the palace of light. But the words of Christ contained in that passage show that, on their entrance into the realms of blessedness, saints shall have a meeting with Him, rapturous in the extreme. How sweet was the renewal of intercourse between Jacob and Joseph, when the aged patriarch went down to sojourn in Egypt! Joseph made ready his chariot, and went up to meet Israel his father, to Goschen, and presented himself unto him; and he fell on

his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And when it is said, in reference to the reception which believers shall meet with on their arrival at the region of blessedness, that Christ will gird Himself and serve them, as if Christ would minister to them, instead of their doing homage to Him,—this implies that He will show, in the form of God, and encompassed with the effulgence of the Father's glory, the same condescension which He manifested when, in the form of a servant and in the disguise of His humiliation, He equipped Himself with a towel and washed the disciples' feet. As Christ will, on the great day, after pronouncing the cheering benediction, 'Come, ye blessed of my Father,' and welcoming His people to the habitation of uprightness, present them to His Father as the Fountain-head of all their happiness, saying, 'Here am I and the children whom Thou hast given me;' so, after hailing with warm cordiality each individual saint on his advent to blessedness, He will present him to the Father as the originator of all mercies." That passage is very interesting, after Mr Cumming himself has gone.

"Our friend sleepeth." Only the body sleeps: the soul lives unto God. The deceased believer is with Christ in Paradise. He is absent from the body, and present with the Lord. He is departed

to be with Christ, which is far better. He is in the society of the blessed, where they are all clothed in white, made perfect in holiness, and where they walk with Christ as being worthy. It is given to them to eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and to feed on the hidden manna. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat, for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.' They have entered on the rest that remaineth to the people of God. "Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them."

Praying is done, preaching is done, but still they praise. They sing a new song, saying to the Lamb: "Thou art worthy, for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; and hast made us unto our God, kings and priests; and we shall reign on the earth." They cry with a loud voice, saying: "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

THE EXERCISES HERE AND IN THE SANCTUARY ABOVE COMPARED.—Our friend Mr Cumming, in

the course of his ministry, swept the whole compass of Christian experience. With rare delicacy of perception, and with admirable skill, he struck a great variety of notes:—

THE PENITENTIAL NOTE, "After Thy loving-kindness, Lord,
Have mercy upon me:
For Thy compassions great, blot out
All mine iniquity."

THE LANGUISHING NOTE, "My soul for Thy salvation faints;
Yet I Thy word believe.
Mine eyes fail for Thy word: I say,
When wilt Thou comfort give?"

THE COMPLAINING NOTE, "Lord God, my Saviour, day and night
Before Thee cried have I.
Before Thee let my prayer come;
Give ear unto my cry."

THE SUBMISSIVE NOTE, "All day, my God, to Thee I cry,
Yet am not heard by Thee;
And in the season of the night,
I cannot silent be.

"But Thou art holy, Thou that dost
Inhabit Isr'el's praise.
Our father's hop'd in Thee, they hop'd,
And Thou didst them release."

THE EVANGELISTIC NOTE, "Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation; and uphold me with Thy free Spirit (thy Princely Spirit): then will I teach transgressors Thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto Thee."

THE GRATEFUL NOTE, "I love the Lord, because my voice
And prayers He did hear.
I, while I live, will call on Him,
Who bowed to me His ear."

THE TRIUMPHANT NOTE, "O sing a new song to the Lord,
For wonders He hath done:
His right hand and His holy arm
AND Him victory hath won."

THE GOD-GLORIFYING NOTE. "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory, for Thy mercy, and for Thy truth's sake."

All these notes were struck with admirable skill in the services of the sanctuary on earth. Now they have all gone up into pure praise in heaven. The sorrowful notes are turned into joy, the longing into fruition, and the complaining into praising. All the lines that were begun here, below the clouds, run up into heaven, and are perfected there, above the clouds, in glory. Yet in heaven there is a reference to the past history of the redeemed, that they may see, and that we may see, how much they have to give thanks for. "What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they? These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

How comes it that death is a peaceful sleep to the believer and not to the unbeliever? Because Christ, by His death, deprived death of its sting, and the grave of its victory. Therefore, the believer in Christ can sing: "O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the

law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." To Him be all the glory.

CHRIST'S REGARD FOR THE INDIVIDUAL BELIEVER.—"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." This is a single individual, and Christ knows him. Christ has many to attend to, and yet he attends to each one, as much as if he were the only one. He telleth the number of the stars: He calleth them all by their names. Not one faileth. Those that the Father gave Him he kept: none of them was lost. He who had all the Father gave Him to think on, says: "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." It seemed as if His whole attention were bent toward Lazarus. The whole of this portion of Scripture—the story of Bethany—is fraught with comfort to the individual believer. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus,"—individualising them. He not only loved the family as a whole, but He loved each member of the family in particular. He knew the perplexity, the grief, and the suffering endured in His absence, and He adapted Himself to the state of each. When He arrived at Bethany, He reasoned with Martha; He wept with Mary; and He raised Lazarus from the dead.

Now, it is well for you to remember that Jesus knows you by name; that he knows your fears

and perplexities, your sorrows, your difficulties, your spiritual state and your bodily state. He knows you both before death and after death. It is so homely, so kindly, so friendly, so comfortable, that saying, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth." And you are as much in His hands as Lazarus was. Trust yourself in His hands, and be comforted. He knows your wants and your sorrows, O ye mourners, as truly as He knew those of Martha and Mary, and He will not fail you; He will stand by you, as he stood by them. Believe and ye shall see the glory of God.

THE AWAKING OUT OF SLEEP.—"Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." The primary reference in these words is to the raising of Lazarus. Standing at the grave, He cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." And Lazarus came forth to Him who was his light and life. Christ is the great life-giver. In Him is life, and the life is the light of men. Wherever He goes, death and darkness flee before Him. Lazarus was raised up, but he must die again: we look for "a better resurrection."

Jesus has gone, and it was expedient for us that He should go away. He is on the other side of the Jordan. In His absence those whom He loveth become sick and die. He tarries, but it is for the accomplishment of great and glorious

purposes. He loves His people. He is mindful of His promises. Yet His friends sleep. But the time comes when He will say, "I go that I may awake them out of sleep." He will come and awake them "in the resurrection at the last day."

Sorrow comes before joy, darkness before light, separation before union, and sleep before the glorious awaking. What a contrast between the burial and the resurrection of the saints! The body is dead, yet it is a seed. "It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body."

"Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him." He will bring their happy souls to be reunited to their glorified bodies. Then they will be crowned and welcomed into the everlasting kingdom which God hath promised to them that love Him, and so "made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity."

The Rev. Alexander Cumming, your late beloved pastor, was born in Edinburgh on 24th August, 1804. After receiving licence to preach the Gospel, he was for five years assistant in the parish church of Crieff. "I have heard one or two of the old people," says a visitor to Crieff, "speak

of him with great love, and tell how useful he was there." He was ordained minister of Dunbarney parish, Bridge of Earn, in 1834; and there, by his earnest evangelical preaching, he made a deep spiritual impression.

Mr Cumming took an active part in the Revival work of 1839–40 at Perth, at Dundee, at Collace, and "in the regions beyond," and his name is embalmed in Dr Bonar's "Memoir of M'Cheyne." Mr Cumming was with Mr M'Cheyne at a memorable Communion in Dundee on 19th January, 1840, on which Mr M'Cheyne has set down some interesting notes. "Stormy morning," he says, "with gushing torrents of rain, but cleared up in answer to prayer. Sweet union in prayer with Mr Cumming, and afterwards with A. Bonar (now Dr A. Bonar, Glasgow). Mr Cumming and Mr Burns (William C. Burns, afterwards missionary to China) preached in the school the most of the day. In the evening Mr Cumming preached on the Pillar Cloud on every dwelling (Isaiah iv. 5), some very sweet, powerful words." I also heard him preach that sermon on the Pillar Cloud in the Gorbals Church, and they were sweet and powerful words.

When the Disruption came in 1843, Mr Cumming followed the path of self-denial and sacrifice. He left the Established Church, and became the

Free Church minister of Dunbarney. He laboured for a time under some outward disadvantages, but with many tokens of the Divine favour. The Lord gave him seals of his ministry. He continued there till the end of 1852.

For some time previous to the close of his ministry in Dunbarney Mr Cumming was remarkably drawn out in prayer for Glasgow, especially for the evangelization of the non-church-going portion of the population. He himself discerned the significance of this. The Holy Spirit was exercising him about the perishing multitudes, and leading him to the work. Paul prayed for Rome before he went to Rome. "God is my witness," said the Apostle, "that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." Those prayers were the forerunners of success. Accordingly, when an invitation from the Glasgow Free Presbytery and Evangelization Society came to Mr Cumming to come and undertake missionary work, with a view to form a congregation in Gorbals, he at once resigned his charge in Dunbarney and came. He was then forty-eight years of age, in vigorous health, and full of evangelistic hope (Rom. xv. 13).

The Gorbals parish church had been procured for him, and he commenced his labours there on the first Sabbath of January, 1853. The Rev.

Andrew Gray of Perth, who took a deep and most intelligent interest in the evangelization of the lapsed masses in Glasgow, preached in the forenoon and introduced Mr Cumming. There was a large attendance. Mr Cumming chose for his text in the afternoon 2 Chron. v. 11–14, "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place; it came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying, For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever: that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of God." That was the key-note, and it was not forgotten.

Mr Cumming's style of preaching was new and peculiarly attractive. It was enlivened by anecdote and illumined by beautiful illustrations from nature. It was truly evangelical, deeply solemn, and fresh as the dews of a summer morning in the orchards by the Earn. And he himself breathed the fragrance of one who had been walking in the King's garden, and holding converse with the King. Or, as another expressed it at the time, "On his

knees, in secret before God, we believe he inhales that sweet fire from off the altar, which he afterward breathes out in his public ministrations."

Besides preaching twice every Sabbath-day in that large church, Mr Cumming preached regularly on the Sabbath evenings in the mission district attached, at first in a miserable apartment in 20 Main Street, and sometimes in the open air, not without personal danger, in order to reach the non-church-goers. One who accompanied him from the commencement remarked of his Sabbath evening discourses that "he was always wonderfully drawn out and helped."

The congregation rapidly increased. Experienced Christians were drawn to his ministry. Many families came to sit under one who could both edify the parents and interest the children. And a number of "those without" were gathered in. He unfurled the banner of the Cross in East Gorbals, and large numbers flocked to the standard of Christ.

At his first Communion, April 1853, there were 299 placed on the roll of membership, of whom 33 were young communicants. At the October Communion of the same year there were 524 upon the roll, of whom 43 were young communicants. At the April Communion, 1854, there were in all 700 on the roll, 45 having been admitted on that

occasion as young communicants. At the April Communion, 1855, there were 57 young communicants. In April 1856 there were as many as 63 young communicants. (Young communicants are those who sit down at the Lord's Table for the first time in their life, or those who are restored after having fallen away from church membership.) Besides the young communicants, there was a large number who joined at every Communion by certificate. In 1856 that large church, with more than 1300 sittings, was reported fully let, and the congregation was enabled to exercise a most beneficial influence upon the district.

With the close of this year, 1856, Mr Cumming completed the third year of his ministry among us; and on his third anniversary Sabbath he preached to a very large audience on "The Barren Fig-tree," a most pointed and impressive discourse:—"Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he, answering, said unto Him, Lord let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit well: and if not, then after that Thou shalt cut it down." It had been a time of privilege: all had not improved it; it was still a time of grace; but God's forbearance has a limit, and that limit might be near. Believe now and live.

Mr Cumming had willing coadjutors in his work, as elders, deacons, and district visitors, and in his own generous way he was accustomed to give much credit to his fellow-workers. But the truth is that, under God "who worketh in us both to will and to do," Mr Cumming himself was the living heart, that sent the warm life-blood in strong pulsations to the very extremities of that large organization.

Among the valuable lady visitors I shall mention only one, Mrs Cumming. She was most hopeful and indefatigable, and she actually succeeded in bringing out a considerable number of the poor and the perishing to hear her husband preaching the Gospel. Her coming was to some families like the coming of the morning light. I believe she introduced to some dark despairing souls the dawn of "a better hope," and she pointed them to "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." I know that she was a help and a comfort to her husband in his arduous work. She was an example to others; and when she saw evidence of the good work progressing, she rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

Both Mr and Mrs Cumming bestowed much time and pains in promoting a school to give the children of the mission district a sound secular and religious education, so as to prepare them for

usefulness here and glory hereafter. In that school, first held in a very humble place in 20 Main Street, then in Wheat Sheaf Hall, and finally in those large and commodious premises, now the Board School, in Buchan Street, your late pastor, with unwearied diligence, sowed many a handful of precious seed, which will spring up, according to God's promise in Isaiah lv. 10, 11, and will yield golden fruit in fields beyond the horizon of time.

Mr Cumming took a great interest in the Revival of 1859-60. I was labouring in the Mission planted by him and the Session in Commercial Road, and on his invitation I spent my Friday evenings with him in the vestry, pleading the promises. Mr Cumming abounded in prayer, and our Father, who seeth in secret, rewarded him openly in his pulpit ministrations.

With fatherly kindness, with manifold helpfulness, and in strong faith he upheld and advanced that Mission, which, under his fostering care, afterwards developed into Maitland Church, Rose Street.

I left Glasgow for Shotts in 1861, but from information kindly furnished to me, I am able to supply the following interesting facts:—This congregation celebrated their last Communion in Gorbals Church on Sabbath, 12th April 1863. Mr Cumming preached from Malachi iv. 2—"But

unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of Righteousness arise with healing in His wings." And he spoke at the close of the service from the words of Jesus, "Arise, let us go hence." Dr M'Donald, of North Leith, who assisted on the occasion, spoke cheering words, and preached in the evening from 2 Sam. xviii. 3—"But now thou art worth ten thousand of us: therefore now it is better that thou succour us out of the city." On the Monday following Dr J. Oswald Dykes, now of London, preached the last discourse, and at the conclusion gave a most appropriate address from Psalm cxvi.—"O Lord, truly I am thy servant, I am thy servant: and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds." The Disruption principles were not waxing old, they were still fresh and vigorous and practically operative in the congregation. "Thou hast loosed my bonds." We are free. Speaking as a representative of the young ministers of the Church, he set his seal to those great truths to which our fathers witnessed, and for which they suffered. No doubt it was a trial to Mr Cumming to leave the Gorbals Church, the scene of such success; but the congregation was courteously accommodated in Knox's Free Church (Rev. R. C. Smith, minister), until by the favour of God on the efforts of pastor and people, Victoria

Free Church was built and ready to receive you, on Sabbath, October 2, 1864.

In 1874 Mr Cumming, after great and exhausting labours, retired, and went to live first in Lasswade, and latterly in Merchiston, Edinburgh. But still he continued to take an interest in the young and the friendless and the sick, and, as he was able, to speak a word in season to the weary.

But he gradually became feebler, and after the death of his beloved and only son William, on 26th June, 1880, his strength rapidly declined. He was visibly drawing near to his latter end. A week or two before his death he said one day to his daughter who was with him, "A verse has been peculiarly sweet to me of late—'Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory" (Ps. lxxiii. 24). He added, "What more could we wish than that God should guide us by His counsel while we are here, and afterward receive us to Himself?" I recognise as it were the voice of our father in these his very words, spoken but a little while before he ceased to speak, and they are sweet and welcome to us. They convey his last message.

On Monday the 13th December he became unconscious, and he continued so till the morning of the 15th at 7.30, when he passed away very gently, his face still retain-

ing that sweet expression with which we were so familiar.

Mr Cumming was early impressed with the unspeakable importance of the work of the Lord in the conversion of sinners. It was a blessed privilege to be associated with Robert M'Cheyne and his fellow-labourers in the Revival of 1840. That period gave tone and character to Mr Cumming's ministry in Glasgow.

Now this congregation, as a congregation, has enjoyed a like privilege. It was a blessed beginning—your early history in the Gorbals. May that period give tone and character to your whole congregational life! May your spirit ever be evangelical and evangelistic—making inroads on the kingdom of Satan, introducing rays of light from the risen Sun of Righteousness into the realm of spiritual darkness, till the whole earth be filled with His glory! Amen, and Amen.

It is a peculiar pleasure to me to meet with so many old friends on this occasion.

A few short years of evil past,
We reach the happy shore,
Where death-divided friends at last
Shall meet to part no more.

SERMONS

AND

REVIVAL PAPERS,

By the Rev. Alexander Cumming.

SERMON.

The Israelites crossing the Jordan.

"And the priests that bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood firm on dry ground in the midst of Jordan, and all the Israelites passed over on dry ground, until all the people were passed clean over Jordan."—JOSH. iii. 17.

THE Israelites, before making their triumphant march through the Jordan to Canaan, had remained stationary for some time at Shittim, opposite Jericho. Their experience at that encampment had been checkered by vicissitudes of joy and sorrow, of humiliation and encouragement. They had been there seduced into the idolatry of Baal-Peor, and all the degrading vices with which it was interwoven. Though they had been visited with severe rebukes for their disloyalty to the King of Israel in moulding and worshipping the golden calf at the foot of Mount

Sinai, they had discovered a bias towards similar disaffection during the whole of their journeyings through the desert of Arabia. They carried the star of their god Remphan, and bore the portable shrines of false gods through all the successive stages of their progress towards Canaan, and their strong propensity to offer homage to the false deities of the surrounding nations was elicited into open manifestation when they were allured to the festivities of Baal-Peor, and mingled in the detestable practices which disfigured them. God's wrath burst on them, and twenty-four thousand fell under His frown, and were suddenly cut off in the indulgence of their lusts.

And what was realised in the history of the collective body of Israel is often verified in the experience of individual believers. They discover a love of the world, or a tendency to unhallowed gratifications, like the Israelites in fabricating the golden calf, and though blighted with rebukes for such a downward tendency, they cherish a secret bent towards such moral perversity; and it may be that when their earthly career is verging towards its close, they incur the frown of their heavenly Father, like the Israelites at Shittim.

As the idolatrous propensity which had so obstinately clung to Israel was punished and repressed at Shittim, so their sin of unbelief,

which had vitiated the whole course of their pilgrimage, was unmasked in fresh malignity when, for one act or exhibition of it, Moses was condemned to die ere they entered the limits of Canaan. When he, who was habitually obedient and believing, was adjudged to die in the wilderness because, under the operation of a transient incredulity, he had smitten the rock, instead of speaking to it, the sin that so easily beset them was stamped with virulent malignity. When Moses, who had proved so effectual an intercessor for the people was not heard when pleading that, though as the captain of the Lord's host, he was not to be permitted to conduct them to Canaan, he might yet, as a private individual, be allowed to traverse and explore its hallowed bounds, an offence caused by unbelief was branded with God's severe reprobation.

But though the Israelites were afflicted and humbled at Shittim, they were pardoned, honoured, and exalted. They discomfited the Midianites who had ensnared them into idolatrous compliances; they slew Balaam, whose subtle contrivance had led to their seduction, and they were assured they had not forfeited the promises of the Abrahamic covenant, seeing Joshua was invested with the dignity of commander to guide them into Canaan. They could, from Shittim, gaze on the luxuriant

domain across the Jordan, confident that they were to be soon its proprietors; their eyes, instead of being wearied with the monotonous wastes of sterile sand and stones through which they had long journeyed, were regaled with the olive-clad heights, the vine-clad terraces, and the sparkling brooks of their destined inheritance. Still, one formidable barrier interposed between them and it — the Jordan which was rolling in flood, and they knew not how they were to effect the passage of it.

Their condition, while gazing on the verdant charms of Canaan, and while shut out from it by one great confronting obstacle, may remind us of the believer's experience when, after toiling through the weary round of his pilgrim journeying, he, through invigorated faith, advances within sight of the blessed region that awaits him beyond the grave. Bunyan describes this exhilarating frame of mind by the country of Beulah, that was continually cheered by the singing of birds; where the flowers appeared on the earth, and the voice of the turtle was heard in the land; where Christian and Hopeful were animated with the new wine "that goeth down sweetly, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak." Yet, though the pilgrims were privileged with glimpses of the city which was reared upon massive stones, and

whose portals were pearls, and the blaze of whose reflected glories made them fall sick with desire of speedy participation, there was one circumstance that abated their joy and damped their minds—a river spanned by no bridge, rolled its waters between them and the New Jerusalem.

To see how we may surmount the terrors and difficulties connected with our dissolution, let us ponder the following topics:—

I. The preparation which the Israelites were to make for advancing towards the Jordan, and entering the channel.

II. Their experience while achieving the passage of the river.

III. Their prosperous march into the promised Canaan.

Firstly, There were three elements of preparation necessary for the Israelites crossing the Jordan in safety and comfort.

1. They were to prepare themselves victuals to be used on the day of the crossing (Josh. i. 10, 11).

2. On the day of effecting their passage they were to set apart, and take over with them, the paschal lamb, which was to be afterwards slain.

3. In moving towards the river, they were to keep their eyes fixed on the ark of the covenant.

1st. When the saint receives, in the accumulated infirmities of age or the ravages of some acute dis-

temper, the intimations that death is at hand, he should seek a seasonable stock of heavenly food; he should trim his lamp for the journey. The taking down of the many tents belonging to the community of Israel, and transporting their separated materials and all their other articles across the Jordan, was enough to engross their attention, so that manna could not have been conveniently gathered. They could feed on what they had previously hoarded, but they could not provide themselves with fresh supplies. In like manner, the solemn crisis when the mortal tabernacles are crumbling down, and the weight of our dying agonies is oppressing us, is not a period for acquiring a knowledge of those truths and promises which are fitted to sustain us. It is a time for appropriating and feeding on their benignant declarations, which are suited to such a momentous season. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Heb. xiii. 5). "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me" (Ps. xxiii. 4). I knew a pious woman who had committed many precious promises to memory, and who, during a long depressing illness, which terminated in death, derived ineffable comfort from their frequent recurrence to her mind. She said, "One promise passes before me

like a gleam of light; I am unable to retain it for any lengthened interval; when it disappears another flashes before me and relieves my gloom; it also soon vanishes, but another comes like a star in the darkness, beaming on me a sweet radiance, so that I am never left to utter desolation."

2d. Another element of preparation for the Israelites crossing the Jordan was setting apart, and taking with them, the paschal lamb, which was to be slain on the fourteenth day of the month Abib.

However engrossing might be the business of the eventful day of crossing, one duty must not be omitted, namely, the setting apart of the paschal lamb that was to be slain for the celebration of the Passover. The day of the passage through Jordan's channel was the tenth of the month (Josh. iv. 19), the day on which the lamb destined for sacrifice was to be separated from its dam, and appointed for slaughter (Exod. xii. 3). The Israelites observed the Passover with unusual solemnity on the fourteenth day of the month on the plains of Jericho, and the long suspension of that ordinance, owing to the obduracy of the old generation, whose carcases were doomed to fall in the wilderness, would infuse extraordinary ardour into their minds in complying with the prescribed ceremonial connected with it. Doubtless, then, each family selected the lamb whose blood was in four

days to be sprinkled upon their doors, and carried it with them across the river which severed them from Canaan. Torn from its parent, it might bleat in piteous tones as it was borne with them over the Jordan. And, in like manner, the Old Testament saints, when stretching themselves on their dying couch, looked forward with eager anticipation to the work of the Messiah, which was to provide for them a righteousness. Like Abraham they saw Christ's day afar off, they saw it and were glad. "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them" (Heb. xi. 13). Though the Paschal Lamb was not yet slain, by the effusion of whose atoning blood they were to be saved, they joyfully laid their hands upon its head, and dying they confided in its meritorious virtue.

3d. In moving down towards the flooded Jordan, they were to keep their eyes fixed on the ark of the covenant.

Let us notice that the Israelites were not informed how they were to cross the Jordan till the day on which they effected the passage of it. It is said in Joshua iii. 2, that after three days the officers went through the host telling the people how they were to accomplish the crossing. The three days seem to have been the three days

during which the Israelites were to provide themselves victuals (Josh. i. 10, 11). Thus it was only on the day of the crossing that they knew how they were to get over the barrier to Canaan. So dying grace is only given at the dying hour. Jesus is called the finisher as well as the author of our faith, and He will not forsake us at the solemn crisis when we are passing from time to eternity.

The Israelites at the close of the three days, during which they were to prepare themselves victuals, moved forward to the immediate vicinity of the Jordan, and they seem to have encamped there for only one night. In proceeding from this last stage of their wilderness encampment towards the river, an injunction was given them which indicates to us other operations of faith which should be exerted as we are in actual march to the margin of the river of death. "When ye see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it" (Josh. iii. 3.) It may seem strange that the pillar of cloud, that preceded them during so many marches, should not be stated as having guided them on this occasion. But it evidently did not set out with them on their departure from Shittim, but disappeared at that locality. It must be remembered that it was not vouchsafed to them

when they first started from Rameses on their expedition from Egypt to Canaan. They journeyed from Rameses to Succoth along the well-known route, and still there was no symptom of its being granted; they advanced from Succoth towards Etham, and still no such supernatural assistance was bestowed; but when they came to the edge of the wilderness of Etham, and were about to deviate from what seemed the proper line of march, and to be lost between mountains and the Red sea, the pillar of fire towered before them in all its luminous majesty, showing that Jehovah was with them to direct and cheer, as well as Moses. And as this effulgent symbol of God's presence did not appear at their earlier stages of progress, so it did not attend them during their last stage from Shittim to the Jordan. It was their guide and director in the desert, and pointed out their routes during their residence in "the wilderness wherein there was no way;" but in populous and inhabited countries, intersected with highways, and where there was no danger of mistaking the route, there was not the same need for its genial glow and infallible indications. It would be sweet to the Israelites, when reviewing their experiences and journeyings through the arid wastes of Arabia, to think of the stately column which guided and cheered them in their toils and dangers, and which

shed on them its mellow effulgence during the night, scaring away wild beasts and any invading enemies. And it will be sweet to saints in the world above, when taking a retrospect of the way by which God led them through this world, to trace the comforts which were blended with their trials (as the spreading cloud tempered the blaze of the sultry sun), and the light which taught them the path of duty in every perplexing and perilous crisis.

Thus the ark, and not the cloud, was to precede the Israelites in their advance to the Jordan. The last time we read of the cloud is in Deut. xxxi. 15, when Moses and Joshua presented themselves before God at the tabernacle, that the latter might succeed the former as the leader and commander of the whole community of Israel, and preside over them in their march to Canaan and in their battles with the inhabitants of Palestine. "And the Lord appeared in the tabernacle in a pillar of cloud, and the pillar of the cloud stood over the door of the tabernacle."

The ark seems always to have headed the march of the twelve tribes when they moved from one place of encampment to another. Thus it is said, in Numbers x. 33, "And they departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went

before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting place for them." It is indeed said, in Numbers x., that the tabernacle with its various utensils was to be borne by various divisions of the Levites in the midst of their marching columns, but the place assigned to the ark is an exception to the general arrangement. Jesus our Ark finds out for us our places of repose. He vouchsafes and procures every season of peace from the disquietude of conscious sin and worldly trouble.

It is said in reference to the approach of the Israelites towards the Jordan, "Come not near unto it," *i.e.*, the ark, "that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore." A space of nearly two-thirds of a mile was to interpose between the first column of the advancing army and the ark of the covenant. The reason assigned for this is not, as some suppose, to inspire them with a reverential awe of that sacred symbol, but to permit the whole company to fix their steady gaze on the ark, as they were moving forward to the Jordan. If the tribe that was to take the lead of the whole multitude had pressed close after the priests who carried the ark, the columns that followed them would have had the sight of that animating pledge interrupted; but, as none were nearer it than three thousand feet, as it was borne on the shoulders of

the priests to sever the waters, the whole crowded assemblage, in moving down the sloping descent towards the river, might distinctly see its effects when the feet of the priests were first immersed in the Jordan's wave, and when the river trembled and stood still.

Now, in order that we may maintain a serene and joyful composure on the verge of dissolution, we must behold Jesus, our Ark, dividing the river which separates us from Canaan; we must behold Him disarming death of its sting, and securing us the victory.

In Scripture we are furnished with a profusion of types setting forth Christ and His finished work; but the ark is specially adapted to suggest the comforts which may be diffused over our minds when we come to grapple with the last enemy. At that momentous crisis of our destiny, saints are apt to be haunted with reminiscences of the various errors and deformities that have stained their past lives.

When Christian, in the "Pilgrim's Progress," was crossing the river without the bridge, and was at times submerged in its impetuous floods, his iniquities rushed with a fearful shock on his mind, and he was saddened with a recollection of sins which he had committed both before and since he began to be a pilgrim. Now it will be a

soothing alleviation of our throbbing anxieties, at such a period, to look to Christ as the Ark enshrining the tables of the law, as the Lord our righteousness, honouring the commandments which we had despised. An ark is constructed for the safe custody of articles, or the inviolable security of persons. The ark of Noah sheltered him and his family from the avenging waters of the Deluge; the ark of bulrushes was constructed to screen the infant Moses from the danger of perishing in the Nile. In like manner, the ark, which preserved in safe custody the tables of the law, shadowed the fact that Christ was, by His obedience, to throw lustre on the precepts which we had set at naught. The tables of the law are called the tables of testimony, for they proclaim our duty to yield a complete conformity to them, and hence they proclaim our infraction of duty. But the mercy-seat, sprinkled with blood, relieves the cry or testimony of the tables against us; the atonement of Christ hushes the clamour of the outraged commandments.

The advancing of the marching columns to the Jordan is like the experience of a saint who may have been languishing for a time in the anticipation of a speedy dissolution, but who feels mortal symptoms overtaking him, and says, "This is death." Contemplating Jesus as the Ark, guarding

and honouring the law which we had slighted, he can use the last words of the sweet Psalmist of Israel and say, "Athough my house be not so with God; yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for He is all my salvation, and all my desire" (2 Sam. xxiii. 5). He can say, "Whom God hath set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood, . . . that He might be just and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus" (Rom. iii. 25, 26).

Let us now, *secondly*, notice the experience of the Israelites while achieving the successful passage of the river.

The ordinary current (says Bagster) of the Jordan where the Israelites crossed is about fifty feet in breadth, in depth from six to nine feet, and so swift in its motion that it is impossible to swim against it. It has two banks; the first, or inner one, is that which bounds the river when flowing in its ordinary channel; the second, or outer one, is about a furlong distant, and which hems in the river when swollen to an inundation by the melting of the snow on Mounts Lebanon and Hermon, in the months of March and April. The volume of the water is much greater at that time, and the breadth is about a quarter of a mile greater than on usual occasions.

When the priests advanced to the margin of the river, and had laved their feet in its current, the waters stood still. Those which were flowing beneath the point where the separation took place rolled onwards to the Dead Sea, into which the Jordan discharges itself. The whole channel, from the position occupied by the priests to the Salt Lake, which is computed to be from seven to twelve miles, was completely dried up, and left open for the passage of the army. Two miracles were thus wrought; the waters, which would have flowed down, were interrupted in their course, and the floods, which would have rushed down during the time of the crossing were congealed in vast and threatening masses along the channel of the river, and kept from deluging the neighbouring plains. The Israelites, composing a body of two millions and a half, with their children, tents, and utensils, must have consumed several hours in effecting their passage, and it is evident that the floods that would have glided on during that extended interval would accumulate to a frightful mass. They were suspended in a vast heap, forming a continuous frowning ridge along the course of the Jordan, far beyond the city of Adam, which is beside Zaretan. Adam and Zaretan are mentioned as situated in the tribe of Manasseh (1 Kings iv. 12), the one to the right, and the other on the left

of the Jordan. Their distance from the place of crossing was forty miles. Stanley says thirty miles, and, from the tortuous windings of the river, the distance is greater along Jordan's bed.

Thus not only did the power of God arrest the swollen current in its flow, it congealed into a threatening liquid mass the fresh supplies which came down from the sources of the Jordan, and which would, but for the intervening obstacle of the ark, have descended to their appropriate receptacle, the Dead Sea. This explains the phrase that "Jordan was driven back;" for while the gliding current paused in its course, the moment that the Priests of Jehovah, arriving with the ark, touched it, the accumulating waters rushing down and stopped by the ark, went backwards, heaped above the usual level of the river, and formed a vast ridge confined within the channel, that they might not ravage and desolate the luxuriant plains now waving with the barley harvest.

As Jordan's waves were severed exactly where the priests entered, it is evident that when they took up their position in this dried-up channel or basin, they must have been close to the watery mountain. Their faith was tested by their standing under the precipitous cliff formed by the consolidated fluid. But if they occupied a place menaced with greater danger than any

other Israelites, they were nearer the consecrated pledge of God's presence, and were animated with the sublime consciousness that it would repel peril overhanging them. As the priests were dignified with a greater honour than others, they were required to take the place of difficulty; they who sit with Christ on His throne must drink of the cup of which He drank, and be baptized with the baptism with which He was baptized.

Let not ministers of the gospel be surprised if, after being graced with the high distinction of acting as ambassadors for Christ, they are required to face dangers of formidable hue, and even confront a death of bloody violence or racking agony. They may be called to enter the Jordan when its floods are swollen to fearful inundation, and its waves lift up a voice of stern uproar. God will not summon them to this self-denying duty without enabling them to grasp the reviving emblem of His presence, without admitting them to gladdening converse with Christ their Ark, which will be found more than a counterpoise to the awful pressure of their trouble. "When they pass through the waters He will be with them, and the rivers shall not overflow them."

It is possible that the priests, instead of quaking at the towering mass which impended over them, were imbued with such intense impressions of the

power, wisdom, and faithfulness of God, whose majestic symbol could control all the elements of nature, that there was no room for any emotions in their minds but adoring wonder and delight. It was said, "Behold the ark of the God of the whole earth passeth before you." He was to show Himself the Supreme Arbiter of the whole earth in assigning His people the territory of which the Canaanitish nations had been the occupants, and to mark His sovereign sway over the liquid element in its most turbulent agitation. The priests might, therefore, be overpowered with thrilling emotions of pleasure at their nearness to that Divinity who controlled and regulated all human affairs, and be so exulting in present and future privileges, of which the passage of the river was a guarantee, that no dread could possess their minds. And when faithful ministers have been called to surrender their lives by any ignominious or painful death, instead of sinking under anguish or reproaches, they have been swallowed up in a burst of glory from the Saviour, which has irradiated their expiring moments. Like Stephen, they have been ravished with the splendour of the third heavens, and with the compassion of Him who stands up at His place at God's right hand to help His struggling servants, and welcome them into realms of uprightness, as more than conquerors over Satan.

It appears that the people of Israel crossed the channel of the Jordan below the position which the priests occupied, for as the waters were divided exactly where the priests entered, there could not be any space between the ark and the floods to permit the passage of any individuals, far less of so large a community. And as the whole channel below the point where they were stationed down to the Salt Sea, an interval of nine or ten miles, was deserted of its waters, it would afford ample room for their easy and successful crossing. It would seem, therefore, that they marched across the Jordan below the ground that supported the priests; and provision was thus made for the peace and happiness of the vast company. If they were disposed to fix a glance of dismay on the tremulous pile of waters which hung as a frowning precipice above their heads, they would be cheered by the faith-invigorating sight of the ark, Jehovah's resting-place, interposing between them and all danger, and shielding them against the possibility of its approach. The ark, and the priests who supported it, must have been swept away ere the Israelites would be engulfed in the roaring waters of the Jordan. And when the saint draws near the gloomy barrier existing between him and the eternal city, he sees Jesus standing between him and the horrors

incident to that awful hour. Some dread the sensations of corporeal agony with which the crumbling of the corporeal tabernacle may be attended; some tremble at the unknown assaults which the great adversary may make at such a crisis. Others have expressed themselves as appalled with the contemplation of that moment, when the spirit, issuing from its clay tenement, shall return to Him who made it, and shall behold Him face to face, and know in a moment what is to be their doom to all eternity. But, whatever be the varieties of experience undergone by God's people, the Ark, the Lord our righteousness, our Law-fulfiller, will stay the portentous floods of our fears, dangers, doubts, and forebodings.

When the pious Mr Venn was dying, he anticipated his soon meeting with a victorious Saviour, who would tread all enemies beneath His feet. Here is the passage I build upon:—"Who hath spoiled principalities and powers, and hath made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it." God, who has decreed all the arrangements connected with our departure from this world, may have ordered that some of us should waste away under the severe torments of some lingering disease, or die under the inflictions of ferocious persecutors. There is no stipulation that the Jordan shall not be deluged with impetuous floods when we reach

its borders. Some are allowed to pass when its waters glide in their ordinary channel, and with a serene, untroubled surface; but some of us may be compelled to face them during the raging turbulence of a diffusive inundation. But Jesus, our Ark, will curb the foaming river as easily as the smooth and gentle stream: the dark valley may at first look hideous, yet the Shepherd will be there holding up His rod and staff, to the view of His terrified sheep.

There might be great diversity checkering the frames of mind among the Israelites, as they trod the dry channel of the Jordan. Some might gaze too much on the majestic pile of waters, and too little on the ark which shielded them from its fury; they might be like Peter, who, when walking on the Sea of Galilee, looked more to the mountainous surges than to his Master, who trod them with regal and controlling step. They might say, If these dreadful masses of liquid were let loose upon us, their furious impulse would carry us away, as the hurricane sweeps the withered leaf. Others might exclaim, I am so much occupied in gazing on the ark supported beneath the liquid wall, that I have no time to gaze at the floods: I know that as the pillar of fire rested above the mercy-seat, the invisible God is at this moment enthroned on the ark, spreading His wings between us and the

swellings of the river. Others might say, I am glowing with such transport at the sight of yon sunny, vine-clad rocks, and yon olive-clad mountains in the land on which we are entering, that I cannot think of the angry flood.

It generally, if not always, happens that, though God's people are rent with many sore perplexities at the commencement of their passage, they are enlivened with joy ere they reach the further brink. Many a child of God, says a good man, have I seen coming up weeping to the river of death; but I never saw one weeping all the way through. It happens to many a pilgrim that his faith soars to a serene vigour when he is brought to encounter the last enemy, such as he had never realised before. It was with a deep insight into the experience of God's children, that Bunyan represents "Ready to halt," a weak believer, as bequeathing his crutches to another, ere he girds himself to cross the river without the bridge, and then effecting his passage through the floods, without their aid. He had followed his Master during his whole pilgrimage with a feeble and faltering step, and now when he had arrived at the most arduous part of his career, he walks into the river without the aid of his long-cherished props. He did not carry them in, like the mortal garments which disappear in the river, but bequeathed them to others,

animating them with the promises and encouragements which had sustained himself, and traversing the waters without any symptom of lameness. Bunyan suggests the explanation of this: he had received a summons to sup with the King in the land of immortality, or was cheered with ravishing views of heaven, which made it contrast strongly with the toilsome marches, and laborious struggles of his past pilgrimage. In like manner, many saints have struggled on in their path to immortality with painful efforts and halting pace, and they have argued, that if their faith has been feeble and vacillating during their whole sojourn on earth, it will be completely overshadowed when they come to the dreaded pass between time and eternity; and yet, that was the part of their course in which they could walk with more assured footsteps than ever, and shout their triumphs with transport and melody, in strains rising above, and drowning the murmurs of the river of death.

The children of the congregation got across Jordan's channel as well as the warriors and persons of great station, and many a young person has reached the New Jerusalem in safety through the blessing of Him who said: "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Numbers of young Israelites, instructed by their parents regarding the glory and significancy wrapt up in the ark of the

covenant, might traverse the soil of Jordan with as much confidence and rejoicing as any aged saint. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God perfects praise, and many a little one might lisp or falter forth his admiring awe of the ark which parted the river.

Thrice happy is the case of those who, with the swellings of Jordan in all their threatening aspect before them, can soar to the height of full assurance, and triumph over every desponding apprehension. They who are possessed of such heroic faith, can stand in the midst of the river of death and say, while looking to Jesus their Ark, That Ark must perish as soon as I. Jesus, my Head, must be destroyed ere one of His members can perish: the King of Zion must be hurled from His throne ere I can be overcome. He has said, Because I live, ye shall live also. He has gone before me to explore the land of milk and honey, and He will come and receive me to Himself, that where He is I may be there also. He is the Joshua who has gone as the spy to explore and examine the heavenly Canaan, and He will return and conduct His people, after all their migrations in the wilderness, to the place where He is. Let us notice

Thirdly, the safe arrival of all Israel, after crossing the Jordan, to Canaan.

It is worthy of notice that the priests were not allowed to resign their post in the middle of the stream till a command to that effect was issued by Jehovah. Lest any lame man, or any loitering straggler should be hid from their view while crossing by the windings of the river, or the thickets which overspread its banks, the omniscient God must take a survey of the whole society, and see that no Israelite is left in the eastern border, or still occupied in traversing the dried-up channel, when the waters are returning to their former course. The determination of the time when the priests must retire from their former position and march to the western margin of Jordan cannot be left to the erring judgment of man. And let none suppose that one of the redeemed company shall perish amidst the floods and fears and perils connected with dissolution.

The priests with the ark first entered the river to prepare the way, and they were the last to quit the dangerous channel. Christ, our Priest, with the merits of His finished work, goes before us to open a passage through the portals of death to the city of habitation, and He does not only go before them but forms the rearward behind them, to guard them from the approach of evil.

Many are harrowed with a dread of what they

may behold or experience when the disembodied spirit bursts from its clay covering, and comes in contact with the God that made it, and all the stupendous realities of the invisible state. Not a few have been agitated with a chilling horror at the anticipation that on leaving the body they may see Satan, the roaring lion of the bottomless pit, whose hideous form, as they imagine, would chill them into despair. But the objects that they will behold in being disencumbered of their clay tenement, will be such as must dispel all lingering remains of fear. The last object which the dying martyr Stephen seems to have beheld, ere resigning his breath, was Jesus standing at the right hand of God. He offered up two petitions, one that He would receive his departing spirit, and another that He would forgive his enemies; and he gazed at Jesus maintaining the attitude that told that He was ready to help him amidst his expiring struggles, and to welcome him into the realms of immortality. And if the last spectacle he beheld, ere shaking off his corporeal fetters, was the third heavens, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, the first thing he would behold, after the bruising and lacerating stones had quenched his temporal life, was Jesus in the same encouraging attitude. No doubt he would see the angelic attendants who were to convey his soul to the upper scantuary; but

Christ would be the great and dazzling object that would engross his thoughts.

And, in like manner, the instant that saints throw off their corporeal clod, the far flashing glory of Emmanuel will be displayed to their view (as the sun is easily seen by us though so far off), and will tell them how welcome they are to the fruitions of eternity. They will not be left for an instant to gaze round as strangers on an unknown coast, but they will be greeted with a cordiality which will tell them that sorrow and sighing shall for ever flee away.

Their passage upward through the atmosphere, the domain of Him who is called the Prince of the power of the air, will be attended with the sublime perception of Satan's perfect discomfiture, and of their being more than conquerors over all enemies. They will behold the fallen angels, as the Israelites, on reaching the ulterior margin of the Jordan, might see at a distance some of the Canaanites panic-struck and stupified at the wonders of divine power which secured their prosperous passage.

And it is meet that the saints, in soaring up to their heavenly home, should share, in some measure, the triumph which Jesus enjoyed when, after consummating His work of obedience, He ascended up on high, leading captivity captive. Dr Owen says he believes that when Christ mounted upwards,

amidst august ranks of angels, to enter the gates of pearl, and take possession of heaven for His ransomed company, He literally dragged the baffled powers of darkness behind His glorious train, as a Roman general, when entering in full splendour into the metropolis of the empire, led captive kings and princes in chains in his triumphal procession behind his gorgeous chariot, to grace the lustre of his victories. Now, as the fallen angels were mortified and oppressed with a sense of defeat, as Christ ascended to rule in our nature over the universe, so when a saint perfected in holiness is borne up through the air by angelic attendants, as Elijah was conveyed in a chariot of fire, they feel that His foot is bruising their head, and that a conquerer is passing through their domains.

Some are afraid at the idea of entering the invisible world after an interval of stupor, unconsciousness, or mental derangement such as disease often produces, but this will not render their transition to the fruitions of immortality less sweet. When Peter, James, and John were slumbering on the Mount of Transfiguration, they were recruiting their bodies after the fatigue of climbing the steep ascent and listening to all the instructions of Jesus. The sublime scene took place, in all probability, during the night, for it is said that the next day when they were going down the hill the

disciples asked why the Scribes say Elias must come again, language showing that a night had been spent in the holy mount. They had fallen asleep on the lofty mountain under the chill air of night while Christ was pursuing His solitary and unbroken vigils of supplication, and were prevented from hearing the first part of the sublime conference going forward between Himself and His celestial visitants, when all at once they were startled from their repose by the scene of ineffable magnificence which burst upon their gaze. Christ stood before them with a face blazing like the sun, and His garments glowing with the tints of supernatural purity and brilliancy. What a transition from the blank and unconsciousness of sleep to the realities of celestial vision!

Now a saint, stretched on a couch of sickness and death, will, on awakening from the stupefaction of delirium, break away from time, and be brought into contact with the beatific scenes of eternity, and the sight of Emmanuel and of an innumerable company of happy spirits will rush upon his enraptured sight. Hence some one speaks of believers languishing under particular forms of disease as being surprised into heaven.

It is said by Christ in reference to the time of dissolution that when the fruit is brought forth, immediately He putteth in the sickle; when

believers are matured for the courts above, they will be translated without delay to the region of purity and perfection. Many years ago, in the vicinity of the city of Perth, I was among a number of spectators witnessing the process of inflating a balloon with gas that an æronaut and his friend might soar by its aid in an adventurous expedition to the aerial regions. It was held down with ropes till it might be charged with the requisite amount of buoyant material, and when this was the case, and it was struggling and straining upwards, some who watched the operations going forward, said, "It is time these ropes were loosened, the balloon is ready to mount." So when the believer is being rapidly replenished with grace, and mature for the fruitions of immortality, God severs by disease and death the ties which bind him to earth, and lets his soul bound upwards to the inheritance of the saints in light.

After the passage of the Jordan was effected, a commemorative pile of stones was placed in the current of the river, and another one reared on the western side, to signalise the triumphant passing; and when believers enter Canaan, they rejoice in their victories over death, and sing undying anthems, telling of their conquests over sin, Satan, and the last enemy.

When the Israelites hastened through the dried-up bed of the Red Sea, it was under the gloom of night, except so far as it was relieved by the genial glow of the pillar of fire which guided their inexperienced steps through the untrodden waste. Day dawned only as they gained the ulterior margin of the ocean, and pointed out to them the weltering corpses of their once embattled foes. But when they traversed the channel of the Jordan, this was done under the unclouded splendour of the sun, and in open defiance of their awe-struck enemies. And when the sinner is emerging from the bondage of his unregenerate state, day begins to break just as he renounces Satan's prevailing ascendency. Once he was darkness, now he is light in the Lord, and his progressive course to glory is that of the just, resembling the morning light which shineth more and more and more unto the perfect day. Death is the perfect day, when, through Him who bare our curse, we pass from the sorrows of mortality, and the conflicts of our sore warfare, to that place where "there is fulness of joy, and where there are pleasures for evermore."

When the children of Israel entered Canaan they ate the old corn of the country, and they had a luxuriant barley harvest ripe for the sickle, which they could immediately cut down and

appropriate. When we are ushered into the inheritance of the saints in light we shall eat the old corn of Canaan—we shall enjoy those gratifications with which Abel began to be regaled nearly six thousand years ago, and on which the patriarchs and prophets have been luxuriating.

And yet, as Israel had not only an old stock of provisions ready for their use in the hoarded produce of previous years, but a fresh harvest waving as a supply for their wants, saints shall have ever new sources of happiness, new materials of joy crowding upon and ravishing their spirits.

It was at the time of the Passover that the children of Israel started from Rameses in Egypt for Canaan, and it was at the Passover season that they crossed the Jordan and took possession of Canaan. Christ is the author and finisher of our faith; a sight of Christ, as the atoning sacrifice, first makes us start from Egypt for Canaan; and new virtue drawn from the Saviour will give us victory over death, to introduce us into the glories of immortality.

And now, as fathers and mothers crossed the Jordan and led their children to Canaan, let us all set out for the land of immortality, and conduct our children to that happy region with us. Let us illustrate this subject by referring to the migrations of the swallow tribe. After they have reared

their second brood, about the middle of September, their whole time is employed in preparing their young for their distant and laborious flight to the sunny climes of the south. When the approach of cold weather gives the intimation, which their instinct makes them understand, that they must speed to warmer southern countries, they assemble on the roofs of some high castle or other elevated building, or some lofty tree. When congregated there, one, who assumes the leadership of them and who is seen flying round them in all directions, springs upwards with sudden celerity, uttering repeatedly a significant call, which the whole winged community obey by mounting in a beautiful spiral direction, till they disappear from view in the azure vault. After remaining for about a quarter of an hour beyond the range of our vision, they return and settle on the edifice, barn, or tree from which they ascended. This process is repeated two or three times each evening during a period of eight or ten days, after which the whole feathered tribe take their departure from our country. The object of these aerial excursions is to train the young for their arduous and fatiguing flight.

Thus should parents train and discipline their children for the journey to the better Canaan: let them exercise the wings of faith and love in their children, and then set out for the cloudless

skies and sinless occupations of the heavenly world.

Let us all, young and old, seek to return and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon our heads, that we may receive joy and gladness, and that sorrow and sighing may flee away.

And now let the careless and impenitent consider what misery they will endure if they die neglecting the great salvation. There is reason to believe that the inhabitants of heaven will see the smoke and horrors of the bottomless pit, and feel their happiness enhanced by the spectacle, and that those who are in hell will behold afar off the splendours and blessedness of heaven, and feel their wretchedness doubled. Thus, it is said, that the wicked shall be tormented in the presence of the Lamb (Rev. xiv. 10), that the righteous shall go forth and behold the carcases of the men that have transgressed against God, whose worm dieth not, and whose fire is not quenched (or who shall pine under God's eternal frown); and that they shall be an abhorring to all flesh (Isa. lxvi. 24).

On the other hand, as the rich man saw from hell the banquet of heaven, and Lazarus in Abraham's bosom, the wicked will be filled (as Christ told the Jews) with weeping (Luke xiii. 28) and gnashing of teeth when they see Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, and themselves thrust out.

Hell will be a double hell when they see the glare of that place which they rejected, and where they might have fixed their eternal habitation.

Let us then fear, lest, a promise having been given us of entering rest, any of us should come short of it.

SERMON.

Compassion of Jesus for a Dying Malefactor

Compassion of Jesus for a Dying Malefactor.

"And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise."—LUKE xxiii. 39–43.

THE sacred Scriptures overflow with encouragement to all who are anxious for the salvation of their immortal souls. Not only are they fraught with enlivening promises, that, if sinners renounce their ungodliness, they will be graciously accepted; but they supply us with numerous instances in which renovating grace has been dispensed to persons stained with the foulest guilt. Thus the Apostle Paul was pardoned, though he had been a blasphemer and a persecutor; and one reason assigned why he "received mercy" is,

that in him first, God might show forth all long suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. In other words, Paul, a transgressor of the first magnitude, was saved and made a pattern of God's overflowing grace, that none might despair. Multitudes of those who instigated the crucifixion of Jesus were made monuments of God's triumphing mercy: thousands of those who exclaimed "Not this man, but Barabbas," are now crying out in Heaven "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

Love is strong as death; it overcomes all things; and if in some respects this is the case with the love glowing in the bosom of the creature, much more is this the case with the love that burns in the glorious Trinity. "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" The argument to show that God will dispense to us every needed boon is founded on two circumstances—the transcendent gift bestowed on us in God's only begotten Son, and the freeness with which it was conveyed to us.

There are four expressions used in Romans, 5th chapter, to show our unworthiness when Christ died for us. We were "without strength," we

were "sinners," we were "ungodly," and we were "enemies;" and we are assured that the love which bestowed so great a favour, when, instead of meriting it, we deserved eternal wrath, will not withhold lesser favours in spite of our hideous demerits. God delights to pass by the sinner when he is lying in his blood, like the helpless infant cast into the open field, unshielded and uncared for, and to say, "Live," while he is polluted and miserable. And it is a greater proof of the free grace of God to meet the sinner in his degradation and ruin, and to vouchsafe him pardon and a title to endless blessedness, than, after he has passed through a process of mature sanctification, to receive him to heaven. There is a display of more condescending love when God gives remission of sins to a man who is his enemy, and who wears all the hateful lineaments of Satan's image, than after he has become his friend, and is adorned with the divine image, to introduce him into the palace of light and love. In our text we see Christ bending a look of love upon a transgressor, immersed in the lowest depths of the horrible pit and miry clay, lifting him out of its pollutions, and, on the very same day of merciful visitation, ushering him into the glories of Paradise.

First, Let us notice the prayer of the penitent thief, and the other indications of grace which he gave.

Secondly, Let us attend to the benignant answer of Jesus.

I. When the penitent malefactor was first suspended from the cross, he seems to have been fired with all the malice of the carnal heart against Jesus. It is said, "They that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking Him, with the scribes and elders, said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for he said, I am the Son of God. The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth" (Matthew xxvii. 39–44). The malefactors, who were suspended from the cross beside him, took up the vituperations uttered by Christ's enemies, and hurled them with deadly malignity in the face of Jesus.

Some of our commentators suppose that the plural is here used for the singular, and that, when it is said "The thieves cast reproaches in His teeth," only one of them is meant. Bengel, one of the most eminent of commentators, expresses himself as follows:—"Some conceive that the plural is

here put for the singular, by the figure synecdoche, and thus except the converted robber; in such a horrible matter, however, there seems to be no place for synecdoche. Nor are there wanting instances of men who, in the course of dreadful and lingering punishment, have at first blasphemed and have been afterwards converted." As Jesus met Saul near Damascus, when he was breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, making him an eminent apostle, so he visited the dying thief with his softening grace, while he was uttering words of blasphemy.

And it was meet that God should permit not only Caiaphas and Herod, the Scribes and Pharisees, and other persons of rank and influence, to treat the Saviour with indignity, but even the malefactors, who were suspended beside him on the cross. Our Surety was bearing the vengeance due to us, who deserved to have suffered, not only from God's immediate inflictions of wrath, from the worm that never dies and the fire that cannot be quenched, but from our partners in misery, and it was meet that, among other elements of woe which were passing upon him, there should mingle the vituperations and blasphemies of two felons.

How awful is the case of those who, lulled in total apathy as to their spiritual condition, are about to be launched into an unseen and inter-

minable existence! The Psalmist, speaking about such persons, says "There are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men." Boston says, "Some men live like beasts, and some men die like beasts." But what does the Psalmist declare as to the experience of the foolish, at whose prosperity he was envious, when the veil which shrouds the invisible world from our notice is lifted up, and the realities of eternity burst upon their view? "How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors" (Psalm lxxiii.).

We have seen a stream about to hurl itself over a precipice, and we have noticed that it is often as calm and serene, when only an inch from the steep, as when it flowed at an interval of miles. So it is often with careless transgressors: they are frequently as callous and indifferent when on the brink of eternity, as when years intervened between them and the unseen world. We have seen the change in the stream, from placid tranquillity to fierce commotion, as it dashes in foaming violence over the rock; but far more awful is the transition in the sinner's mind from torpid indifference to shrieking dismay when, over the precipice of death, he finds himself rushing into the abyss of eternal despair. Similar was the case of Dathan, Abiram,

and the rebellious company, when the punishment which they merited overtook them. They frowned defiance on Moses, even when he told them that on the day after they had had the controversy with him, God would settle the point in dispute. But when the earth opened its mouth, and was swallowing up the criminal company, they uttered such a shriek, as they were descending into the yawning abyss, that the Israelites fled from the scene of their punishment, crying out, "Lest the earth swallow us up also." Such a state of things may well represent the peril of the penitent malefactor. He had been all his life the slave of the wicked one, and Satan was now rushing with him to the pit of despair, when Jesus breathed spiritual quickening into his soul.

And there may be some here whose history bears, in one respect, a strong affinity to that of the relenting malefactor. Though you have been united to Christ for twenty, thirty, or forty years, you remember a period in your history when you were in imminent danger of death, when you were unconcerned about your interests for eternity. Some sudden casualty, or some dangerous malady, threatened to quench your temporal being at a time when, had death overtaken you, it would have been an entrance into the shades of eternal despair. President Edwards tells us that, when he was a

boy, unconcerned about religious subjects, he was seized with a dangerous fever, and that, looking back on his imminent peril, he saw that God then "shook him over the pit of hell." When the converted malefactor, standing on the hills of immortality, reviews God's gracious procedure towards him during his pilgrimage below, the recollection of his pardoning him, when he was on the brink of perdition, will make him evoke strains of celestial minstrelsy from his harp, such as he would not otherwise have reached.

Zaccheus ascended a sycamore tree to get a view of Jesus as he passed by; and the Saviour found him, and enriched his soul with regenerating grace, saying, "This day is salvation come to thy house." The penitent malefactor was hung on the accursed tree, "dead in trespasses and sins;" but Jesus implanted spiritual vitality in his soul, and he became an heir of the glories of immortality. When the Lord writeth up the people, He shall count that this one and that one was born in Zion. We look with interest on those localities which have been places of nativity to persons who have figured with brilliant lustre on the stage of time. But our ancestors were accustomed to say: "Better a man had never been born, if he is not born again;" and, therefore, the spots where believers have undergone a vital transformation

will possess an undying charm in the eyes of God. When God writes up the people, He will count that Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, was born near the ancient heathen city of Damascus; that Manasseh, the murderer, was born in the prison of Babylon, while his feet were bound with fetters of brass. He will count that Zaccheus was born again on the sycamore tree, which he had ascended to get a sight of Jesus; and that the penitent thief was born while suspended on the tree of agony and shame.

The magnitude of the spiritual renovation wrought upon the soul of the penitent thief must have been wonderful. He was a criminal who had violated the laws of his country in a flagrant manner. The infamous punishment of crucifixion was inflicted only upon malefactors of the vilest characters. The two felons suspended beside Jesus seem to have belonged to the gang of robbers and murderers of which Barabbas was the ringleader; and though, in dishonour to Jesus, the guiltiest agent of the gang escaped, subordinate members of it were punished. Hence there was a glorious opportunity of marking the freeness of God's grace in the salvation of the penitent malefactor.

It has sometimes been asked what elements of knowledge the softened thief possessed

upon which the Holy Spirit operated, so as to produce saving conviction. He must have heard, along with all the inhabitants of Palestine, many rumours of the miracles and teaching of Jesus: he had the privilege of walking beside Him from the Prætorium of Pilate to Calvary, the place of execution. The daughters of Jerusalem, during that doleful march, uttered pathetic lamentations on account of His suffering; and, in acknowledgment of their sympathy, He said: "Weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. . . . For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" He saw from the superscription affixed to the cross that our Redeemer claimed to be a king; and after the Spirit began to illuminate his understanding, he would say—"This is no false pretender. If he declares He is a king, He must have the prerogatives of royalty. I believe He is going from this ignominious cross to the throne. Lord, when Thou art there, think of me." The sun cannot shine upon the sea without exhalations ascending up from it towards heaven; and the Sun of righteousness cannot beam upon a sinner without prayer rising from his inmost soul to the Paradise above. Prayer is called by old divines the pulse of the soul. If a workman were to fall from the top of a house this week, sustaining grievous

corporeal injuries; and the medical man, on examining the state of his physical system, were to say—"I can find no pulse," his danger would be considered very imminent. Some allege, as an excuse for their not supplicating the blessing of God ere retiring to the couch of repose, that they are so jaded with the exhausting toils of the day as to be incapable of performing such a duty. But when did the penitent malefactor learn to pray? While he was enduring the weakness which the ebbing stream of his blood could not fail to superinduce; yea, during the acutest thrill of corporeal torture. He was suffering from the anguish of a wounded conscience, which far outstrips in intensity the smart of bodily pangs.

A young man connected with my congregation met with a sudden casualty, which in twenty-four hours issued in his death. During his illness he was visited by one of our missionaries, who, struck with the terrible injuries he had sustained, said, "I am sorry to see you suffering so much in body." He replied, "I am suffering still more in my soul; please speak to that matter." Under the mental paroxysms which a sense of sin awakened, he was impatient of any allusion to any topic but the absorbing one of his spiritual well-being.

The prayer, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom," implies a most vigorous

faith; and, to see this, let us notice the circumstances of desolate abandonment in which Jesus was placed. He was deserted by His heavenly Father on account of our sins. His disciples said: "We did esteem Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted." They thought that all their hopes perished when men captured Him, and they resigned Him to an ignominious death. All His glory seemed veiled from the outward view, but the eye of the penitent thief pierced through the deep disguise which shrouded Him, and discovered His exalted majesty. We admire the faith of the Syrophenician woman who clung in devoted trust to the Saviour, in spite of stern and successive repulses; but far more remarkable is the faith of the malefactor who recognised the majestic glory of Emmanuel when dimmed and darkened by disastrous eclipse.

And as his faith was of vast dimensions, so was it with the kindred grace of repentance. Though the punishment of crucifixion involved the highest degree of shame and pain, he did not say that it was too great for his offences: "We receive the due reward of our deeds." He felt the severity of his agonies corresponded with the turpitude of his crimes.

Faith and repentance are like two sides of a bent tube: put water into either, and it will rise in

both to the same level. Increased faith leads to increased repentance, and increased repentance leads to increased faith. In the malefactor's mind both graces shot up to stupendous magnitude. Probably there is not in the narratives of the evangelists so sublime an example of confiding trust in the Redeemer.

There are some believers in whom God carries on a work of grace in a few months, weeks, days, or even hours, such as is matured in others only after a long succession of years. Dr Owen says that the Apostle Paul, a week after his conversion, attained a higher eminence in grace than the great majority of saints reach during a lengthened pilgrimage. There are climates in Northern regions where there is a sudden transition from the gloom and torpor of winter to the vital heat and genial breath of summer. A week after the earth has been mantled with snow and encrusted with ice, every vestige of winter disappears, and the ground is clothed with the verdure and luxuriance of summer. Such is an emblem of the transformation which took place in the history of the penitent malefactor: his soul had been wrapt in wintry desolation; God formed for Himself a garden in his soul; He planted the graces which adorn the new creature, and all at once they burst into blooming beauty and fragrance.

No sooner was the spark of grace kindled than it was fanned into a flame; and the case of this felon shows with what rapid strides converted sinners might bound forward in a career of holiness.

The penitent malefactor showed perfect willingness to bear the punishment due to his offences. He did not ask Jesus, whom he believed to be clothed with supernatural dignity, to shield him from the dishonour and suffering connected with his misconduct: he merely implored his favour for the world on which he was entering. And here we see the contrast between him and the obdurate malefactor: the latter simply asked release from the pangs of crucifixion, without extending his views to the awards of futurity. And in the contrast between these two men we have a specimen of the opposite views of regenerate and unregenerate men when overtaken with tribulations. The only prayer which unrenewed men breathe with any earnestness is for exemption from trouble: they join with fervent pathos in supplications offered up for their recovery from sickness, but with regard to pardon and sanctification they are indifferent. Far otherwise is it with believers: they are more anxious that their souls should be purified from the stains and pollutions of sin, than that they should have an immunity from the smart of tribulation. They wish that their afflictions should be

sanctified much more than that they should be removed. They say: "Lord, let me not leave the furnace as I entered it: rather let its fires be kindled into sevenfold fierceness, and burn with devouring glow, than that I should emerge from it with as much dross as when I entered it."

The converted felon could not bear to witness any indignities offered to Jesus, and he rebuked his partner in wretchedness for railing upon him. This would not have been wonderful after he had known that his prayer for mercy had been heard. But before he was aware whether Christ would lend an ear to his requests or not, he reprehended the insulting conduct of his obdurate neighbour. "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?" Do you not tremble to use such language? He had a solemn awe of God pervading his mind, though all around were uttering blasphemies, or "shooting out the lip and shaking the head" at the Saviour. Some believers say they cannot rebuke sin, because they were, during their unregenerate career, so careless and worldly. But there is a way of reproving iniquity in which we do not exalt ourselves above others. The relenting thief added: "And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds."

Wonderful was the grace which melted and

subdued the heart of the penitent thief. Christ as a mighty monarch made him willing in the day of His power. We must never forget that Christ was, according to the words of our Shorter Catechism, a prophet, priest, and king, both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation. Though on the cross He was reduced to the deepest abasement, He was adorned with supreme glory as accomplishing the greatest work which God or man had ever conducted to a consummation. The cross was a weapon which pierced through Christ's soul and body; yet it was a triumphal chariot in which He led captivity captive. The cross was like the gallows which Haman had erected for the execution of Mordecai; yet upon it he was ignominiously to expire. The cross was Satan's expedient for throwing indelible disgrace on the cause of the Saviour, and sinking it to ruin; and yet it was God's device for shedding imperishable glory on His character, and leading to the triumph of His cause.

The spiritual excellences which adorned the thief may be regarded as the fruit of Christ's kingly power; while in his prayer he may be regarded as a witness to Christ's royal prerogatives. He was, when first suspended from the cross, like the withered rod of Aaron when lodged in the vicinity of the ark: soon it was im-

bued with vegetable life, graced with buds and blossoms, and clothed with luxuriant fruit. Satan had got the two malefactors hung beside Jesus, that great ignominy might be thrown upon Him, as if He had been worse than men of the most infamous character; yea, a very prodigy of wickedness. But little did he think that in the case of one of them he was bringing a diseased soul near the heavenly Physician, out of whom virtue would go forth and heal him.

We read that, while the kingdom of the ten tribes lasted, some men were conveying a corpse to its sepulchre, when a hostile band of Syrians came in their way. Afraid of their aggressive violence, they suddenly threw their burden into the grave of Elisha, when the dead man started up to life through contact with the prophet's bones (2 Kings xiii. 19–21). Thus the penitent malefactor was brought near Jesus, when spiritual life was infused into his soul.

He became a noble witness in behalf of the prerogatives of Jesus. At a time when all men were leaving our Redeemer to the forlorn desolation of his condition, who was it that stood forth as a champion of his royal dignity? Was it a disciple, or a famous apostle? No; it was a felon who had forfeited his life to the outraged laws of his country. And ere the Saviour shall want men

to give their testimony to His perfections and finished work, he will go to the condemned cell and rescue a murderer from his doom, and qualify him to discharge such an important task.

In every age of the Church's history we find that, when particular truths of Christianity have been denied, God has raised up champions to shed a flood of illumination upon the doctrines brought into question. Six days before the Crucifixion, Jesus rode into Jerusalem as the King of Israel, "lowly, bringing salvation, sitting upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." The Scribes and Pharisees, the most influential classes of the nation, refused to recognise him as the King of the Jews, but their lack of service was made up by the children who followed in the line of Christ's royal procession, and who exclaimed, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" When Christ was asked to silence their cries of gratulation, He answered, "If these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Luke xix. 40). And when He was hanging on the cross, to which there was affixed a superscription as if He had been a false pretender to the honours of royalty, it was necessary that a witness should appear to attest His royal prerogatives. And had no one vindicated His lofty claims, the timbers of the cross would have become vocal, and would

have pronounced an emphatic ascription in His praise, "Jesus the King of kings and Lord of lords."

The malefactor not only uttered a verbal declaration attesting His heavenly dignity, but he trusted his soul to His protection as a powerful monarch. "Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom." This language was as much as if he had said, "Lord, Thou art going from this cross of agony to occupy Thy throne in the Palace of Light: think of me when it shall be well with Thee. My friends are ashamed of me, for by my crimes I have incurred a death of deep ignominy: they will be glad to forget me, an outcast and a criminal. When Thou art seated on Thy throne of majesty and power, let some beam of Thy favour fall on me, great sinner though I have been."

II. Let us notice the prompt and benignant reply which Jesus returned to the prayer of the malefactor. The malefactor prayed to Jesus as a King, and as a heavenly monarch He answered his petition. He turned his cross into a throne, and as the sovereign disposer of all things, as the arbiter of eternal life and eternal death, He said, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." With the hand lacerated with a nail, He laid hold of a victim of Satan's tyranny, and made

him a glorious trophy of His grace. He put him on His brow, bleeding with the crown of rankling thorns, a resplendent gem, a prelude of the many crowns that will yet wreathe His head, studded with innumerable jewels, and which will proclaim Him to be the King of kings and the Captain of His redeemed people. And to hush any doubt which might quiver in the mind of the penitent sinner, He prefixed to His declaration of love His usual asseveration, "Verily, I say unto thee."

He made no remarks on the profligacy of his life, or on the vituperation which he had recently hurled upon him; without one word of reproach He, who gives to all men liberally and upbraideth not, assured him of a speedy welcome to Paradise. There is a harmony between the benignity of Christ's reply and the language of expansive love which the Father addressed to the returning prodigal. He who lay in the Father's bosom from all eternity, who knew the depths and yearnings of His affection to the human race, has, in the parable of the Prodigal Son, pourtrayed the actings of His melting compassion towards awakened transgressors. When the prodigal was merely walking to the father, the latter ran to him; he did not wait till the best robe was put upon him ere he approached him. While he was yet disfigured with rags, and without a ring on his hand, or

shoes on his feet, he fell upon his neck and kissed him. And without declaring, as did the elder brother, that he had devoured his living with harlots, or imputing any blame at all, he exclaimed, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." Thus the prayer of the malefactor was answered without one word of reproach or any measure of withholding the blessing. Christ took no notice of the railings of the obdurate felon, but he promptly responded to the aspiration of the penitent malefactor.

In the forgiveness of the thief, and his assurance of future blessedness, there was a glorious exhibition of the freeness of God's grace flowing through the righteousness of Christ. Here was a man whose whole life had been an unbroken series of deformities: he had launched into deeds of gross profligacy, and had not one holy action to present to Christ as a ground for his acquittal from the guilt and punishment of his delinquencies, or for a diminution of his impending misery. And yet, when he appealed to Christ's mercy, with the unmitigated burden of sin resting on him, he received immediate remission. He who justifies the ungodly frankly forgave the mass of his provocations, and promised him a free welcome to Paradise.

What a wonderful thing was it for the man

who left the condemned cell on the morning of the memorable day of Christ's crucifixion to be admitted before night into a mansion in the realms of immortality,—for the criminal who had been thrust out of the Jerusalem below, as unworthy even to die within its limits, to be ushered, ere the sun descended, into the glories of the Jerusalem above!

"To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise." Our Saviour was not in the habit of using the word "Paradise" to pourtray the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. On one occasion He speaks of the place of happiness as "His Father's house" in which there are many mansions. In addressing Nicodemus he uses the word "heaven" three times to delineate the scene of final blessedness, and that in one verse: "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven" (John iii. 13). And if Christ was not in the habit of employing the term "Paradise" either in His public addresses to the Jews, or in addressing His private instructions to His disciples, there must have been some reason for using it on this occasion, and the explanation is probably as follows:—The paradise of Adam was a scene of beauty and sublimity such as the world has never exhibited since the blight of

Adam's sin fell upon it. Everything within its precincts was—

> "Beauty to the eye, and music to the ear."

It was a luminous type of the Paradise above, and suggested images of rest, peace, and happiness. The malefactor was, at this time, tortured with the fiery pangs of crucifixion, and the word "Paradise" would convey tranquillising ideas of delight and blessedness, and be like a refreshing breeze upon his fevered brow; yea, like the odours of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces.

We cannot doubt that, after Jesus had delivered his benignant response to the prayer offered up to Him, the malefactor would be filled with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. His faith was great ere he made his application to our Redeemer, and we cannot doubt that after the favourable answer it would be vastly increased. He might well have counted on his pangs lasting for two or three days, as was often the case with transgressors condemned to die by crucifixion, but he knew that, ere the sun descended behind the hills of Benjamin, he would be standing on the mountains of immortality. No wonder that he would be exulting in the foretastes of celestial enjoyment at the very time when the Father was bruising Jesus and putting Him to grief. When the Saviour was exclaiming in bitter

pathos, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" the thief was enlivened with the expectation of coming glory.

But it may be asked, Was it right, was it fair, that the Sinless Man should be overshadowed with gloom while the sinful man was enlivened with gladness? Yes, it was fair and right. Jesus had taken upon Himself the sins of the thief and the punishment due to them, and the thief got his righteousness imputed to him, and was receiving some of the benefits which He had earned for him. There was a mutual exchange made between the two parties; the heavy guilt of the malefactor was transferred to Jesus, with the woes which it merited, and the glorious obedience of the Redeemer was imputed to the malefactor, with the rewards to which it was entitled.

The promise of Jesus, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise," was accomplished through the instrumentality of His enemies. The great Passover Sabbath was to commence about six o'clock, and the Jews wished that the bodies of the sufferers should be taken down ere it commenced. There was a command of God that if a criminal was hung upon a tree, he should be buried before night, lest the land should be polluted. And the Jews felt as if some contamination would spread over the land, if the victims of the cruci-

fixion were not interred ere the Passover Sabbath began. The soldiers were, therefore, instructed to take the iron mace and break the legs of the sufferers. When they came to Jesus, they found he was already dead. But a soldier, anxious there should be no doubt about the matter, took a spear and thrust it into His side.

We see from this that two persons may pine under the same disease, and to the one it may be the portal to heaven, and to the other the portal to hell.

Perhaps the penitent thief was the first individual who entered heaven after the veil of the temple had been rent in twain from the top to the bottom at the death of Jesus. It has been said, Would it not have been a noble thing if the first soul that was admitted to the realms of immortality, after the Saviour expired, had been that of a pious king like David and Hezekiah, or one like the patriarch Abraham? But it was more in harmony with all that Jesus did, that the first spirit ushered into the palace of light and joy, after the Saviour had given up the Ghost, should be the pardoned and sanctified spirit of a great malefactor. "In the days of his flesh" He permitted a sinner woman to wash His feet with her tears, He allowed a sinful man to lean upon His bosom; and it was in conformity with all the transactions of His life

that a great transgressor, redeemed from the ruins of the Fall, should be the first to reach the inheritance above after the great atonement had been completed.

Christ said not simply, "To-day shalt thou be in Paradise," but "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise,"—just as when He delivered His farewell address to His disciples before His death, He said, "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

When the malefactor entered the new Jerusalem, all its blessed inmates would be moved to meet him at his coming, and his entrance would be hailed with cordial gratulations, not on his own account merely, but for the sake of Him who hung on a cross of shame and agony, and who saved as a trophy of His grace a felon who was suspended at His side. But if his reception into the world above by angels and glorified saints would be of the most cheering description, still more animating would be his welcome from the Saviour Himself, who would delight to place him as near Himself in the palace of light as he was when hanging upon the accursed tree.

And now let us try to realise the scene of triumph which burst upon the view of the penitent malefactor when he was ushered into the Paradise of which the Saviour had spoken to him. Though

while on earth he believed Jesus to be a mighty king who would save him, we cannot say he understood that, by the effusion of His blood, He was making an expiation for His people's sins. Not even the apostles of Jesus were aware that He was doing this, till the light of Pentecost beamed upon them; and the first glimpse they caught of the significancy of the great transactions of Calvary was probably from the reported conversation which Christ held with the two disciples going to Emmaus, when He showed them that Christ must first suffer and then enter into His glory.

When Jesus entered the world of light in His disembodied condition there was palpable evidence furnished to all the redeemed company that His death had taken place. We read in the book of Revelation (vi. 9) of the souls of the martyrs, "that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held," who cried, "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost Thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" John is said to have seen, not their whole persons, but their souls; for in their corporeal frames they had endured the vengeance of their persecutors. When Jesus, in His disembodied spirit, occupied the throne of the paradise above, the whole redeemed company saw that He had completed those transactions by which He had "finished transgression

and made an end of sin." Moses and Elijah, on the mount of transfiguration, conversed with Christ "of his decease which he should accomplish at Jerusalem;" and what they longed for with anxious anticipation, all heaven would be waiting for in a pause of solemn suspense. When, therefore, Jesus entered heaven after the consummation of His great undertaking, all the glorified saints would exult with joy unspeakable and full of glory. David, whose tongue became like the pen of a ready writer when seeing dimly through the vista of generations the atoning work of Jesus, would, when he knew of its eompletion, say, "Now are my foul sins in the matter of Uriah, which darkened my earthly career, fully expiated." Abraham, who saw Christ's day afar off and was glad, would exclaim, "Now has a nobler victim than Isaac been laid on the altar: on the mount of Calvary has God provided a substitute for guilty man." Jacob, who saw Jesus represented by the ladder which bound heaven and earth in harmonious union, would, on understanding the results of the great expiation, say, "Christ is the real ladder, forming an imperishable bond between heaven and earth."

The penitent malefactor would find all the inmates of the New Jerusalem in a tide of admiration and ecstacy; and, looking down to the cross with

new wonder, he would see a blaze of glory rushing up from it, and shedding a flood of illumination such as had never previously gilded the land of uprightness.

It was a happy thing for the malefactor that justice overtook his crimes, for thus he was brought into contact with the Redeemer of souls. Blessed are those whom the sun of tribulation drives under the shadow of the smitten Rock, and whom it keeps under its sheltering protection.

And here we cannot help noticing the contrast between the two felons in their conduct towards the Redeemer. The Holy Ghost probably made the spectacle of the Saviour's patience, compassion, and purity, the means of impressing the mind of the penitent malefactor; but, though the same spectacle was presented to the notice of the obdurate malefactor, he seems to have continued in remorseless impenitence. The sun and rain which ripen the wheat for the garner, mature the tares for the burning; and the same ordinances which refine believers for the heaven of perfect purity, become to those who reject an offered Saviour a savour of death unto death.

If the thief who railed on Jesus died in his hardened condition, what will be the element which will create the deepest throes of anguish? Will it be that he was a robber outraging the laws of his

country? No. Will it be that he joined the gang of Barabbas and committed depredations on society? No. Will it be that while his companion in guilt and crime was praying he was railing at the Redeemer? No; the circumstance which will cause the deepest disquietude in his soul will be this, that when he heard his companion in wretchedness implore pardoning grace, he was too proud to solicit the same favour, and that he is in the realms of despair, because he was unwilling to be saved by Jesus. The Saviour was to the two malefactors like the pillar of cloud which guided the Israelites to the Red Sea when Pharaoh and his host were pursuing them. The one half of it was a streaming radiance, shedding a celestial glow over the encampment of the Israelites: the other half was lowering gloom, throwing shades darker than midnight over the chivalry of Egypt, and prelusive of their coming overthrow and death.

But let us not quit this animating subject without suggesting some topics of comfort to sinners. The farther a prodigal has departed from God, the greater is the delight with which He hails his return to Him from his sinful aberrations. "There is more joy over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine holy angels, which need no repentance." Dr Thomas Goodwin says, "There is more love shown by God in the pardon and

salvation of one lost transgressor than in upholding in unfallen purity all the intelligences of heaven." Christ has more delight in the exercise and manifestation of His affection towards the human race, than in His beneficent dealings towards the angels of light. This may be illustrated by reference to an incident in the life of David. We read that a lion rushed from its den and seized a lamb belonging to the flock of David. The son of Jesse was too vigilant a shepherd to permit the rapacious animal to succeed in its attack. He flew after it, killed it, and rescued the helpless lamb from its devouring jaws. He would tend all his sheep and lambs with care, but he would feel a peculiar throb of emotion as he gazed on the lamb for which he had hazarded his life, and which might long bear in its body scars which told of the ravages which the lion's teeth had made. Unfallen angels were never under the domination of the prince of darkness: they yielded not to the seductions of the evil one like the children of men, but stood impregnable to all his devices. But we, the children of Adam, have been in the power of the evil one, and, but for Christ's interposition, we would have remained eternally under his sway. Jesus loves the angelic hosts, but He views with still profounder emotion the believers on earth for whom He shed His precious blood.

Let no one say he is chilled into something like hopelessness because of the multiplicity and magnitude of his sins. Let us not overlook the infinite sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice: His merits are like the boundless deluge which covered Mount Ararat as easily as a hillock of sand. After the Saviour ascended into heaven, the first spot visited with showers of blessing was murderous Jerusalem, the most privileged, yet the most guilty city on earth. It seems, says a great man, as if He wished that the party who had smitten the great Rock should be the first to drink the waters which issued forth from its clefts. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

REVIVAL PAPERS.

I. A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE RELIGIOUS REVIVAL WHICH TOOK PLACE IN PERTH DURING THE YEARS 1839 AND 1840.

II. INCIDENTS CONNECTED WITH THE REVIVAL WHICH TOOK PLACE IN DUNDEE DURING THE YEARS 1839 AND 1840.

PREFACE.

THE short narrative here given, of transactions connected with the work of the Spirit, carried on in Perth and Dundee during the years 1839 and 1840, is derived from a personal survey of the scenes then exhibited. The cases of conversion related, were presented to me in writing by the persons who underwent a saving change, or by some of their intimate associates. I have merely abridged their statements, or altered a little the language in which they were embodied. The Psalmist was delivered from the gloom which overshadowed him, by "remembering the years of the right hand of the Most High" (Ps. lxxvii.); and we may be emboldened to expect mercies from the Father of Lights, by contemplating what He has done for transgressors, unworthy and hell-deserving like ourselves.

ALEXANDER CUMMING.

GORBALS, GLASGOW, 1860.

I. The Revival of Religion in Perth,

DURING THE YEARS 1839-1840.

CHAPTER I.

PRAYER AND EXPECTATION.

"I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel." —EZEK. xxxvi. 37.

PERTH had been signalised for the ascendency of Protestant truth in it from the era of the Reformation from Popery, and had been blessed since that period by a succession of able preachers of the cross; but many godly people in it complained that, at this time, the religious atmosphere in it was cold, and that a revival was necessary. Numbers of its Christian inhabitants were thirsting for the quickening influences of the Spirit, and had been in the habit, for years, of meeting in praying groups, of two and three or more, to besiege the throne of grace, and implore the promised descent of the Comforter. The accounts of the great work

of God at Kilsyth in the summer of 1839, and of the subsequent awakening at Dundee, gave an invigorating impulse to their aspirations, and excited the confident hope that He, who is the bountiful rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, would not dismiss their supplications for a kindred blessing to the town of Perth. The fact that God was marching through the land, while his paths were "dropping fatness," infused new energy into their devotions, and enabled them to sustain prolonged wrestling with the Father of their spirits for a blessing on their fellow-creatures.

Many Christians, dispersed through the land, felt an animating impulse to prayer and active exertion for the spiritual well-being of others, from the consciousness that "the Hope of Israel was no longer a stranger in the land, or a way-faring man turning aside to tarry for a night," but fixing his tabernacle in some privileged localities. There were many cases of Christians who had unbelieving friends residing in distant parts of Scotland, who were emboldened to use active efforts, by epistolary correspondence, and other means, for their conversion, by the circumstance that God was hearing prayer, and gathering sinners to Shiloh. Emboldened by the persuasion that God was near, and ready to second their exertions by His resistless agency, they transmitted to their ungodly relatives

letters, setting forth their ruined condition, and the ability of Christ to save; and breathing the most impassioned appeals that they would consider their ways, and turn to the Lord without delay. Such notes were attended with wonderful success, and they who penned them were astonished at the speedy results of their prayerful endeavours. Their supplications for the good of others were not tainted with the element which often vitiates the prayers of believers, viz., a latent distrust of God's willingness to grant the spiritual boons solicited; they were prompted by the expanding assurance that He was seated on a throne of grace for the purpose of dispensing the communications of His love to needy applicants.

It is not wonderful then, that the good work going forward at Kilsyth, which shook the whole country, should have inspired fresh resolution and eagerness into the groups of praying believers in Perth, and enabled them to prosecute their hallowed vigils of prayer, till they calculated, with unwavering trust, on a season of blessing being vouchsafed to their city. How often does it happen that desponding fears prevent believers from continuing for a lengthened period their applications to the mercy seat, and that they desist from their importunity, just when it would be crowned with success. In coming from the

world to the throne of grace, the mind is often unhinged for spiritual duty by its contact with earthly things; but when, through recourse being had to the blood of sprinkling, the stains contracted by the believer are wiped off, and everything that could hinder the ascent of his petitions is cleansed away, he is sometimes tempted to suspend his communion with God, just at the time when he might obtain any promised boon he implored. In repairing to a pump to draw water, we sometimes find a slight derangement in the machinery, which requires a little liquid to be thrown into it, and the handle to be plied for a short interval ere the required fluid will arise; and no one seeking such a necessary article would abandon the work when success was at hand. And yet, how many a saint, after freeing himself at the throne of grace from the guilt of sins which obstruct fellowship with God, retires from the scene of holy seclusion, just when full access to the Father is renewed, and his petitions would be preferred with acceptance. How often does the performer on a musical instrument find that when he takes it up it is out of tune: he labours to recover it from its ineffective condition, and after it has breathed many a discordant note, it is at last so successfully tuned as to emit a stream of melody; but will its possessor, after laboriously going through this process, dismiss it ere he has solaced himself

with its minstrelsy? And yet, when the mind of the believer has been discomposed by the agitations and cares of earthly business, and when, after returning to his closet and regaining communion with God, he has thrown off the languor and earthliness which had infested him, he is apt to discontinue his importunities just when the heart is in tune to remind God of his promises, and when from his Peniel there would ascend music of ravishing pathos to the sanctuary above.

The praying bands in Perth were so much refreshed by the intelligence of God having risen to refresh his inheritance, that they were able to continue in prolonged wrestlings with God for the neighbourhood in which they resided. Laving themselves daily in the fountain of the Saviour's blood, and getting every impurity which would provoke His holy eye cleansed by pardoning grace, they toiled in unwearied supplications for others, realising the frame of mind described by our Saviour when he says, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John xv. 7). One saint, whose heart was much expanded in benevolent sensibilities for the well-being of others during the Revival, said, "I was much drawn out in prayer for the inhabitants of the whole town and neighbourhood: it seemed so easy to take them in the arms of faith

and love, and bring them to Jesus that he might teach them by His grace, and raise up from among them a seed to serve Him."

Nor was this spirit confined to members of the Church of Scotland; several took a deep interest in the "awakening," as it was called, who belonged to other denominations, but whose Christian benevolence extended far beyond the circle of their own communions, and who, by their prayers and encouraging remarks, contributed to help it forward. One of them, whose sympathy took an ampler range than the little religious body to which she belonged, and who travailed in prayer for spiritual blessings to Perth, said to me that on the evening on which Mr Burns first preached in Perth, her soul was dilated with ineffable desires that God would work through His instrumentality: "I saw," she said, "he was youthful like David, and my prayer was, Lord make him like David, when, with the sling and the stone, he slew the uncircumcised Philistine; put a word into his mouth which may still the enemy and the avenger." Thus, before the great communication of spiritual influence to the city of Perth, in the end of the year 1839 and the beginning of 1840, there was exhibited the same spirit of prayerful importunity which took place among the disciples of Christ during the ten days intervening between the ascension of the Saviour, and the memorable

effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. We read that after the apostles returned from Mount Olivet, whence they saw him soar towards the realms of immortality, they were convened with one accord in an upper room, continuing, almost without intermission, in prayer and supplication; and these hallowed exercises were not confined to the apostles, but shared in by Mary the mother of Jesus and other private disciples. And when the fruits of the Spirit were dispensed in such copious supplies, the prayers of Mary and other women, pleading the promise of the Comforter, occupied as important a place in securing the conversion of souls, as the aspirations of the apostles, or the preaching of Peter on the day of Pentecost. And, in like manner, the sweet and unobserved wrestling of private believers in Perth, who were determined to give God no rest till He "should establish and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth," served a most important purpose in securing for their city a blissful season, when the doctrines of our religion, instead of continuing dead speculation, or an inert mass, were so animated by the breath of the Spirit as to become vital operating principles in the minds of many previously careless souls.

CHAPTER II.

PRAYER BEGINNING TO BE ANSWERED.

"In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee."—ISAIAH xlix. 8.

AFTER many of God's people had urged their suits for mercy to Perth with ardour and importunity for a protracted interval, the great Head of the Church sent at length to that city, in Mr William Burns, the agent whom he was chiefly to employ in answering them, and who was to be the channel through which the blessings, descending along the ladder which Jacob saw, were to be dispensed to many thirsty souls. His preaching in Perth, at that memorable crisis, which God had appointed for the rich effusion of His Spirit, was humanly speaking, accidental. He had gone from Dundee to the Bridge of Earn, for the purpose of visiting me and preaching in the parish of Dunbarney, of which I was the minister. On his way to return to Dundee, and passing through Perth, he was arrested by an urgent request that he would preach there. This was in November 1839, and a great work of conversion began and went on pro-

gressively for months, the results of which will be commensurate with eternity. As it had not been arranged that Mr Burns was to deliver his message in Perth till the forenoon of the day on which he preached, it was necessary that active means should be used to circulate the notice of his intention.

For some hours before the commencement of public worship, several agents, glowing with the hope of an impending shower of blessing, sped with alacrity from house to house to announce that Mr Burns would deliver a sermon in the West Church. Many other messengers were enlisted at houses which they visited in their rounds, and thus, in consequence of the great number of individuals charged with the transmission of notices, the same family would, in some cases, have two or three intimations of the sermon conveyed to them. A lady who was destined to have an arrow winged into her bosom that night, and which was never to be extracted till the Master took it out and the balm of Gilead healed her wound, and she was regaled with permanent peace and joy, received, that day, three announcements rapidly following each other, that a herald of the cross, who had been much honoured of God, was to address the inhabitants of Perth in the West Church. She was intent on completing some piece of ladies' work

that day, and was unwilling to have her occupation interrupted by the intrusion of any business whatsoever. The first intimation forwarded to her produced little impression; the second affected her with wonder; the third thrilled her with awe. She debated with herself whether she would relinquish her prescribed task, and go to the meeting, or prosecute her pastime; but such a feeling of solemnity gradually diffused itself over her spirit, that she exclaimed, "I must leave my work at all hazards and go to the church." She repaired to the church, and that night she saw herself to be a lost sinner, though a period elapsed ere she found peace.

The West Church was crowded on the evening referred to with a dense assemblage, numbers of whom were panting for the blessing, believing that the time to favour Perth, even the set time, was come. Others gazed in stupid wonder at one through whom God was said to have performed some strange inexplicable work at Kilysth; not a few rankled with feelings of hostility to the preacher and his cause, feelings which were too unequivocally mirrored in the looks which they darted at the pulpit. The text selected by Mr Burns as the basis of his remarks, was, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom" (Job xxxiii. 24). The whole chapter was read, and he seemed so much anointed from on

high, while going through this exercise, that a remark which one made regarding him, at another time, might be applied to the peculiar circumstances of that evening: "He seems to read the meaning."

The sermon consisted of a powerful exhibition of the law and gospel, and during the delivery of almost every part of it arrows from God's hand went speeding in various directions through the church, settling with barbed tenacity in not a few of the audience. One female, who had gone to the church that night, and who had been a stranger to vital religion, was extremely impatient and uneasy during the reading of the chapter; she felt, through her dislike to the speaker, strongly impelled to go away, and yet a curosity to hear him strongly goaded her to remain; the desire to withdraw increased, and yet the wish to remain and hear grew more intense, till, amidst the opposing tides of inclination, her soul was distracted and almost torn to pieces. This mental tumult remained as the sermon advanced, and just as she was finally retiring in disgust from the church, she heard Mr Burns make the following remark: "God has in mercy put a fence around the pit to prevent us from falling into it; but my heart and yours are like so many sharp knives, and we rush forward and cut through the fence that we may go down to

the pit." These words penetrated her soul with such power that she resolved to remain to the close of the religious services, however prolonged they might be; still rage against the speaker was the immediate result, and her heart boiled with such malignity against him that, as she afterwards declared, if it had been in her power she would have torn him in pieces. As the night advanced, she felt like a guilty criminal arrested at the bar of God: she ceased to dislike or even to be occupied with the thought of him who proclaimed the tidings of mercy. Indeed, this was a state of mind common to many during the progress of the Revival, who, looking first to the officiating minister, afterwards felt as if behind him the curtain which shrouds the realities of eternity had been drawn up, and the eye saw, beyond the human agent, to the stupendous concerns of eternity, and altogether forgot the presence of man. Many felt the minister to be but the chamberlain who might usher a person for the first time into the august halls of royalty, and who, as soon as he is introduced into the presence of the monarch and the many appendages of grandeur glittering in the palace, forgets the official who admitted him amid the pomp and gorgeousness which dazzle his sight. The young woman stood trembling as at the tribunal of God, till every high thing was brought down, and she went

seeking her way to the strait gate, where she knocked till she found admittance.

Others were awakened by a remark which he made that evening, and which he afterwards repeated with similar results, when discoursing from Deut. xxxii. 35: "Sinners are in the hand of God, hanging over the pit by a brittle thread, viz., the thread of life, which they are making more and more attenuated by their sins; and, instead of being grateful for the hand which holds them back, they are striking at the very hand which so benignantly keeps them out of hell." One who attended the church that night said that he felt such a delight in the Word of God created in his mind that he could have sat up all night perusing it, and that from that time forward he felt an increased attraction and sweetness in the Word of God.

CHAPTER III.

THE ABUNDANT SHOWER.

"Then shall we know, if" (rather "and") "we follow on to know the Lord: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth."—HOSEA vi. 3.

ON the 29th of December Mr Burns resumed his labours in Perth, and the work, formerly commenced, seemed to deepen under his preaching more and more. He officiated at St. Leonard's on the forenoon and afternoon of that day, which was a Sabbath; and at the close of the service he intimated that, if any of the audience were disposed to converse with himself, or Mr Milne, the minister of St. Leonard's, about the state of their souls, they would have an opportunity of meeting with them in the session-house in the evening. Such numbers, oppressed with spiritual anxieties, thronged to the place appointed, that its narrow limits could not accommodate them; and hence they removed to the church, when the spectacle presented was most moving, almost all being dissolved in tears. An elder belonging to the congregation, who is now in glory, had heard the announcement inviting

anxious souls to meet the ministers, and it awakened a tremulous solicitude in his mind. He had been long interceding with persevering importunity for the descent of the spiritual blessing on Perth, and was desirous to see if any considerable number of earnest inquirers would avail themselves of the offer made from the pulpit. He had calculated in his own mind that about eleven or twelve might appear soliciting direction about their eternal concerns, but that no considerable proportion of the audience who thronged the church during the day would come to the vestry in the evening.

When he saw hundreds occupying the pews in the church, he thought they would be anticipating the entertainment of a discourse, and that so many could not be smitten with arrows of conviction from on high. He went up to several of them in succession, saying: "There is to be no sermon to-night; if you are expecting that, you will be disappointed." They all answered: "We know that; we wish to speak to the ministers about our souls." And he was then, as he afterwards declared, filled with confusion of face at the unbelief which had clouded him, and which had prevented him from expecting a great blessing in answer to his prayers. Mr Burns and Mr Milne engaged repeatedly in prayer, and conversed with

them about the state of their souls till a late hour.

In consequence of the deep emotion which had pervaded the assembled inquirers, it was judged proper to intimate that a meeting for religious exercises would be held in St. Leonard's on the forenoon and evening of Monday. At the latter many attended whose occupation prevented their enjoying the forenoon services; but the forenoon exercises were useful and convenient for those whose family arrangements did not easily admit of their leaving their homes in the evening. There was this element of difference between the revival at Kilsyth and that at Perth, that in the latter case it reached many higher in the scale of society than in the former locality; and it was necessary, for their accommodation, that the Word of God should be expounded and pressed upon sinners during the forenoons as well as the evenings.

On Monday morning, being the 30th December, 1839, I received a letter from Mr Burns, requesting me to repair to Perth, and to contribute some assistance in unfolding the Divine message, and stating, at the same time, that the meeting held on the previous Sabbath evening had been cheered by the august presence of Emmanuel. On reaching St. Leonard's on Monday forenoon I found the area of the church crowded with a large assem-

blage, who listened in breathless silence, who were thrilled with devout awe, and who, during the progress of the religious exercises, indicated their emotions by an unusual stillness more than by any audible tokens of feeling. The first speaker commenced the services with praise and prayer, and then expatiated on the love of God as represented in the parable of the lost sheep. Mr Burns followed with a similar series of exercises, and he was succeeded by Mr Milne, the pastor of the congregation. These services lasted for a period of two hours and a half. The impression was deepening more and more during their progress. The flood of conviction and penitential emotion was rising higher and higher, till in one or two cases under the last speaker it could no longer be suppressed. I felt that forenoon as an individual belonging to the nations surrounding the wilderness of Arabia might have done as he entered the encampment of the Israelites, when, from the summit of the luminous column, there stretched an expanded veil of cloud over the tents of God's people, and when each of them knew himself to be under His canopy. I felt as if I were under the cloud, when it not only told that God was near His children, but, as on one of those occasions which occurred (Psalm lxviii. 8, 9), when it not only shielded them from a scorching sky, but when from its sacred bosom there distilled

drops of refreshing rain, cooling the arid sands, and cheering the pilgrim company on their way to Canaan.

At the conclusion of the services a number of the arrow-stricken audience spontaneously rushed into the session-house for more exhortation and prayer; and then the tide of feeling rose impetuously over the embankments within which a sense of decorum and propriety had confined it; and during the prayers and praises carried on, it found vent in cries of bitterness and beseeching appeals for mercy to the fountain of all grace. Similar meetings in the session-house generally took place at the close of the public services, and were rendered necessary by the case of many, who, pierced to the heart like the three thousand on the day of Pentecost, cried out: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" and who required an opportunity of being directed to Christ such as the three thousand enjoyed, when Peter said to them: "Repent and be baptised, every one of you" (Acts ii. 38). When the watchmen who went about the city found sinners, it was necessary that the latter should relieve their minds by inquiring, "Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?"

During the forenoon already mentioned, a lady, who had been always distinguished by the exemplary discharge of her duties in all the relations of

life, as a wife, a mother, and a benevolent friend of the poor and distressed, and who was esteemed in the higher circles of Perth as a saint of uncommon attainments, found herself to be a lost sheep; the chambers of imagery were unveiled to her; in the light of heaven she saw the creeping things pourtrayed on the wall, and though an interval elapsed ere she found peace in Christ, she always referred to the season of the Revival as the time of her espousals, and protested that, whatever opinion the world may have formed of her previous life, she was till then a whited sepulchre. She survived the date of her conversion about seven years. Her character was lovely by natural qualities, but became still more so by grace, and from the close of 1839 till her death she exhibited in full-orbed maturity the graces which adorn the Christian, appearing as a fruitful bough by a well whose branches run over the wall; and with such interest did she ever look back upon this period that, when her health was languishing, and the symptoms were multiplying which showed that her drooping frame would soon be dissolved in death, she left in writing her testimony to the fact that a time of spiritual visitation had been vouchsafed to Perth in 1839–40, and that during its progress she had passed from death to life. I often conversed with her when her health was declining, and referred to

the view of God's love delineated in the parable of the prodigal. She said she was a prodigal till the time of the Revival, however highly esteemed by men, and the Father threw His arms around her while rags disfigured her person. He did not first put the robe on her, and then, when she was arrayed in it, clasp her in his paternal embrace; while in her rags, in her conscious wretchedness, He had folded her in His benignant arms, and then commanded the ring and the shoes and every spiritual blessing to be given to her.

Public worship was kept up on the forenoon and evening of every day but Saturday for months subsequent to the 30th December 1839. The evening meetings were thronged by dense assemblages flocking to St. Leonard's from the town of Perth and the surrounding rural districts, comprehending a range of ten miles in circumference. Many a person, allured to enter within the precincts of the church merely to indulge his curiosity, was, on hearing the way in which the psalms were sung, convinced that a work of God was going on. There was no part of divine worship in which souls allowed the varied emotions of their hearts to find vent more than in rendering to Him the homage of praise. When racked with a disquieting sense of guilt, they could find an embodiment of their feelings in the 51st Psalm, or others of the

penitential songs of the sweet psalmist of Israel; and in their plaintive strains they expressed the doleful apprehensions of their ruin and debasement by the Fall which had been inspired into their minds. Others, fresh with the glow of their first love, gave utterance to their rapturous joy in the more eucharistical effusions of David's harp, such as the 103d Psalm, or the 136th, when it is said, "His mercy endureth for ever," and when the continued repetition of that statement harmonised with their minds, lost in wonder at depths of mercy which they loved to adore, but which they could not fathom. Saints who had long known Christ, and who had been awakened from comparative torpor, rejoiced to express their burning fervour in the thrilling lays of the psalmist; and in no department of public worship was there more communion with God enjoyed, or more delight experienced. The singing of the Psalms was generally prefaced by an exposition of their import, which was valued by the hearers as enabling to praise God with more intelligence and life.

During prayer solemn silence reigned over the assemblies. The awful stillness was rendered the more striking by the dense masses who filled every nook of the spacious edifice. In the gallery there was seen an array of living beings, piled one above another, and reaching to those who

stood on the sills of the highest windows. When the audience was dismissed, which usually happened between nine and ten o'clock, many would linger behind as if they could not tear themselves from a building consecrated by the footsteps of Jehovah. Many looked upon its walls, as Solomon, who exclaimed, "Will God in very deed dwell with man upon the earth," looked on the sumptuous pile which he had reared after God had taken possession of it by the luminous pledge of His presence. Some who had retired from the house of God would be seen in anxious groups conversing with each other on the great matters which they had heard; others would walk home, seven, eight, or ten miles, like the two disciples going to Emmaus when they were sad, yet could not forbear talking of Christ; and, ere they parted for their respective homes, would pray on the dark and silent highway. Other groups would leave the house of God, so much absorbed with a gloomy survey of the hereafter that had swelled upon their terrified vision, that, though travelling in the same direction for miles, they would be unable to interchange any words with each other.

CHAPTER IV.

SOME PECULIAR FEATURES OF THE WORK OF REVIVAL.

"The King is held in the galleries."—SONG vii. 5.

DURING an interval of several months the work of conviction and conversion advanced by palpable progressive steps, scarcely a week elapsing in which it could not be said that the darts of Jehovah had transfixed some souls, who were compelled to flee to the blood of sprinkling. The topics dwelt upon were man's ruined condition, redemption by Christ, the exuberant freeness of the Gospel, and the duty of sinners to comply with its offers the instant they are addressed to them. At a time when the Spirit is operating with power, it is of great importance that the truths which He wields as His instrumentality should be clearly propounded. God never blesses error to effect any good; and the doctrines of the Gospel are peculiarly the sword of the Spirit. Though God makes bare His arm, it is a great mistake to suppose that He dispenses with human agency in unfolding His message. Though the Nile discharges its overflowing floods

every year on the wide expanse of Egypt's plains, this does not supersede the efforts of men to direct and distribute its waters which the heavens discharge on the mountains of Abyssinia. Men dig canals and keep them in repair that the fertilising flood may circulate as far as possible, else a comparatively small margin would wave with the golden plenty of autumn. In like manner, when a flood of "the river of God, which is full of water," is sending forth its copious stores, great responsibility lies upon men to be fellow-workers with God, and to convey through as extended a circle as possible the healing tide. God was truly working with the truth which was declared. Many of those pierced with conviction would declare that some text, uttered in the midst of a sermon, impressed their souls and haunted their minds with a strange power and pathos for months, while nothing else in the discourse affected them, as if God meant to make use of His own word and reject any meditations of men founded upon it. At other times he would take solemn statements of truth pronounced in the pulpit, which had been carefully pondered and skilfully embodied in clear phraseology, and eminently wing them as arrows taken out of his quiver.

Never was it more necessary, therefore, to exhibit divine truth in a manner fitted to enlighten

the understanding, as well as to pierce the conscience, and to stir the depths of the emotions and heart. Misapprehensions cloud the minds of sinners at all times, and this is found to be more particularly the case when they are awakened to contemplate their ruined state by nature. Appeals to the conscience were found to be fraught with great effect, after a luminous exposition of the vital doctrines of our religion. It was after Paul had detailed before Agrippa and the august audience who listened along with him the circumstances of his conversion and the fulfilment of God's great promise uttered by the prophets in the coming of Christ, that he turned to his royal auditor, and said, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets?" This pungent appeal was most effective after the lengthened address which he had delivered on the divine origin of Christianity. And, at the close of sermons and exhortations at this time, practical appeals were found to be of great efficacy; but a careful exhibition of the plan of salvation was made ere the sinner was urged to embrace it. When the wax is melted with the flame, it is necessary to press the seal with some force on it, that the figures or letters engraven on it may be delineated on the wax; and even when men's minds feel the subduing energy of the Holy Ghost, it is necessary to unfold truth with clearness, and to enforce it with

persuasive pathos, that it may make its full impression on the heart.

At this time there was a peculiar appetite for the truths of Scripture. As new-born babes men were receiving the sincere milk of the Word that they might grow thereby; and awakened sinners, dead in their trespasses, were anxious to know whether the Scriptures contained any declarations applicable to their case. The officiating ministers generally expounded some portion of the volume of inspiration, and this was scarcely ever done without offers of the blessings presented in the Word, and a demand that they should be instantly accepted, at the peril of men's eternal undoing. Hearers did not repair to St. Leonard's to be amused with intellectual efforts or mere matters of speculation; but, agitated with anxiety about their provocations against God and the way in which they could find peace. It was said to them, "To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." They were addressed as ambassadors from the great King, who demanded a prompt reply, as did God from David: "Now, therefore, advise thyself what word I shall bring again to Him that sent me" (1 Chron. xxi. 12). This frame of mind engendered in most of them the necessity of no longer halting between two opinions, but of coming to an instant decision on the matters of eternity, and

haunted them not only in church, but in the seclusion of their chambers, and while reading the Bible and good books.

It was at this time that a young woman, deeply impressed regarding her spiritual danger, took up a tract headed with the words—"Wilt thou go with this man?" (Gen. xxiv. 58). In it ministers were compared to Abraham's servant, who went to seek a wife for Isaac, and who would neither eat nor drink till he had told his message. Their function, it was said, was to urge sinners to choose Christ as their Husband,—declaring that many, though they have not seen Him, love Him, and that, though now they see Him not, yet believing in Him, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Rebekah's friends were for her delaying the expedition to Canaan, where she was to enter into the nuptial relation with Isaac; but Abraham's servant insisted on his being allowed without delay to set off with the destined bride of his master's son. "They said, We will call the damsel, and inquire at her mouth. And they called Rebekah, and said unto her, Wilt thou go with this man? And she said, I will go." The young woman above mentioned felt herself disposed to vacillate and postpone a final determination; but the words, "Wilt thou go with this man?" sounded

as a voice from heaven. She was compelled to yield compliance, and cordially acquiesced in the proposals of mercy. She lived for several years after this an exemplary believer, and died in full hope of a glorious resurrection.

CHAPTER V.

PARTICULAR PERIODS OF UNUSUAL BLESSING.

"To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness."—HEB. iii. 7, 8.

THE work of the Spirit continued for several months to advance like the noiseless march of a stream, fringing with beauty the territory through which it flows. Almost daily there were added to the church such as should be saved. There were few boisterous demonstrations of feeling; much silent weeping prevailed; and at times, when solemn appeals were made, and which were evidently seconded by the demonstration of the Spirit, every auditor was seen in the posture of prayer, and all heads were simultaneously bent down, as the breeze sweeping over the field of corn bends every stalk, while they were imploring grace to be enabled to lay hold of Christ. But while the work advanced for several consecutive months, there were several seasons marked at the time, and afterwards spoken of, as fraught with rich manifestations of spiritual influence.

One was the last night of the year 1839, and the

first hour or two of the subsequent year. Public worship had been held that evening in Kinnoul Street Church. A deep pervading anxiety had settled over the audience, and as many were standing outside the church as were accommodated within its walls. At the close of the services it was intimated that, after a psalm was sung, the congregation would remove to the spacious church of St. Leonard's, where there might be sufficient room for the admission of all. The psalm was sung with more than usual sweetness, and immediately the whole multitude, or, at least, the greater part of it, moved swiftly, but with great decorum, to St. Leonard's, each trembling at the thought of losing any of the precious blessings which God was at this time showering down upon the city. I was present that evening both in Kinnoul Street Church and in St. Leonard's; and, standing beside Mr Milne and Mr Burns, either in the pulpit or near it, during the whole evening, I observed that a melting tenderness of feeling was diffused over all the assemblage. In most other places, while preaching, I have felt as if attempting to plough the soil of men's hearts, while the ground was frozen, and the ploughshare could not penetrate the surface; at that time I felt as if the instrument could pierce the soil with ease, and turn up the clods to expose them to the pulverising influences of heaven.

Each individual seemed to tremble at the reflection that, as another year was waning to its close, life itself would come to its termination, and surprise them ere they had embraced the Gospel. The crisis of the departing year became the ground for enforcing immediate compliance with the Gospel offer.

The first speaker began the services in St. Leonard's by giving out, as the theme of meditation, the words of Christ in Matthew xxiii. 37: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" He showed how the wings of Christ were expanded to afford their sheltering protection to that murderous city, guilty above all on earth; and he especially dwelt on the words "How often," stating that none but Christ Himself could paint the persevering love and earnestness of appeal implied in such terms. A few minutes before the close of the year he remarked that Christ's wings, that had been in vain outstretched in time past to shield them from ruin, were still spread out, and that sinners should run beneath their covert ere twelve o'clock struck, and soon after announced that another year had glided away, and gone to God to bear witness against them. "Many," writes a believer who had

toiled in prayer for a blessing to Perth, "felt that night and the next morning that the wings of the Saviour were overshadowing Perth, and had a believing and realising sense of His nearness and love, so that His feathers seemed touching them many days. God seemed very near that night as a God of love, and every word seemed as part of a stream of love issuing from His bosom. There was much silent weeping, and it was remarked that even those who had been unconcerned about divine things were deeply affected by the emotion of the audience." There was not outward noise, but it was like a day of sunshine when the spring is melting the snow and icicles.

The first speaker had concluded with the words, "Yet there is room." Mr Milne followed, and began his exhortation, saying, "There is not only room; there is time." Mr Burns succeeded him, and still the sense of redeeming love increased. The congregation was dismissed between two and three in the morning. As the vast multitude was retiring, some of them were attracted by sounds of sweet melody issuing from the session-house; and, lingering there, they found there were some of the audience uniting in a hymn of thanksgiving, unable to leave till they had expressed their ardent gratitude to Him who had spared them during the lapse of the preceding

year. Many worldly people strongly inveighed against such protracted meetings, though great care was taken that as little offence as possible should be given, and little inroad made on the regularity of family arrangements. This was an extraordinary emergency, as when Paul continued at Troas to prolong his animated addresses through a whole night. I passed on the first day of the subsequent year, which was ushered in by kindred exercises, the house of one who objected much to religious exercises encroaching on the hours of sleep, and saw between one and two in the morning his windows brilliantly illuminated, and heard the sounds of music and dancing and carnal mirth, showing that there was a greater antipathy to the spiritual exercises observed at such a season than to untimely hours indulged in on extraordinary occasions.

A policeman, who watched in the streets of Perth during the night, declared that the protracted meeting, in which so many were induced to close one year in God's fear, and begin another in His favour, had a marked effect in repressing wickedness in the city, and of so overawing the minds of profligate desperadoes, that they were unable to plunge into the usual excesses of depravity.

CHAPTER VI.

SERMON ON CHRIST'S RIGHTEOUSNESS BLESSED.

"I will make mention of Thy righteousness, even of Thine only." —PSALMS lxxi. 16.

A SEASON often looked back upon, as one in which the shout of a king was heard in the city of Perth, was when Mr Burns preached in St Paul's Church from 2 Cor. v. 21: "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." I had the opportunity of conversing with several who were enlightened and impressed, and with some who passed from death to life by hearing that discourse. I was much struck, while carrying on conferences with several of these, to observe how important in helping sinners toward the strait gate is a lucid view of Christ's righteousness, and the freeness with which it is offered, a doctrine which had been elucidated at this time with luminous perspicuity. Some days after the sermon on 2 Cor. v. 21 was delivered, I happened to be sitting in a retired nook of the church of St. Leonard's, ready to converse with any awakened sinners who might present themselves for receiving instruction or en-

couragement. Mr Burns was in the session-house, and Mr Milne occupied another corner in the area of the church for similar purposes. A female of thoughtful and solemnised appearance came and sat beside me, and spoke in the following terms: "I have come, not to tell my perplexities, but to mention how I got them removed under the word that was preached in St Paul's. The minister showed how God could punish our sin, when laid on Christ, although there was so much holiness in Him to attract His love; and that, on the other hand, He could accept and reward us for Christ's righteousness, though there was so much sin in us to provoke His judgments." I asked her if she did not feel much sin in her when she came to beg the garment of Christ's righteousness. She replied, "We were told to repair to Christ for that righteousness in all our sins, and to make a blessed exchange with Him, giving our sins over to Him, and receiving in exchange the merits of His obedience. I learned that my sinful frames and my many pollutions were not to keep me from Him or to be done away before I made application to Him; but that with these I was to go to Him, and to make over the guilt of them to Him, and beg His righteousness and strength."

She had evidently a deep sense of sin, but she repeatedly expressed her persuasion, that, though

for her personal transgressions she deserved the lowest hell, yet in Christ she merited blessings reaching up to the "fulness of God," just as Jesus our Surety, for the loveliness of His moral beauty, was worthy of every blessing, while from our sins being laid on Him, He was visited with the darkest frowns of God's wrath. She felt happy, not only in the fact that Christ was willing to justify sinners, but (Rom. iv. 5) to justify them as ungodly,—as those in whose past lives He saw nothing but an unbroken series of acts, emanating from a principle of ungodliness; and hence she felt she could walk up to Christ, like Joshua the high priest in his filthy raiment, and an accusing enemy advancing with her at her right hand, and say "I cannot strip myself of this raiment, or acquire better robes, but Thou hast invited me to come in this loathsome attire, and to exchange it for Thy robes of dazzling white: Lord, I have come to make this exchange."

This individual expressed more copiously what was in substance expressed by others, who rapidly made the transition from darkness to light. There were others who remained longer in perplexity, from an erroneous persuasion they clung to, that by weeping and praying for a certain interval they could lay God under an obligation to show them mercy and convert them. As long as they refused

to renounce this delusive confidence, they were obstructing the operations of the Holy Ghost, who was convincing them of their helplessness and hopelessness as transgressors of the law, that they might receive salvation as a free gift. It seems cruel for a minister to tell a natural man that by no prayers, praises, or exertions of his own, can he establish a claim upon God for pardon or renovation of heart, but in no way can he better forward his spiritual interests. The converts were convinced of their helplessness, and felt that impending ruin might overwhelm them before night, and lay, according to the imagery of Ezekiel (xvi. 8), like a child unclean in its blood, naked and exposed to the prowling wild beasts of the bottomless pit, in the open field, aware that they could not advance a step towards Him any more than a helpless infant could advance to a place of shelter; and while consciously in this doleful state, they prayed it might be "a time of love." They entreated God to pass by the field in a time of love, to lift up the unclean thing, shrouding it in His mantle, and after lifting it up when in its unalleviated defilement, to wash it from its native pollution. Some, who were told that they were incapable by any performances or efforts of their own to achieve an entrance at the strait gate, and who were informed that they must pass

through it, else ruin might bolt upon them each moment that they continued in a Christless state, experienced that awful sense of their spiritual nakedness which Adam and Eve may be conceived to have felt, regarding that of their corporeal frames, when God, after issuing the first promise in the garden of Eden, took the skins of beasts slain in sacrifice to cover them. After the Fall they knew that they were naked, and hence they wrapped themselves in fig leaves; but ere they were clothed with the skins of the sacrificial victims, they were doubtless commanded to divest themselves of this flimsy covering, and when they stood before God in the shame and agony of conscious nakedness, they were arrayed in the skins of the slain animals. When, therefore, sinners were told that they could by no acts, performed by them in their natural condition, contribute to work in themselves a fitness or worthiness for spiritual blessings, this was enjoining them to disrobe themselves of their self-fabricated coverings, and cast themselves on God's mercy. One, who afterwards found rest in Christ, said with regard to her feelings previous to conversion, "I supposed that if I confessed my sins, and sought mercy, I was bound to believe them forgiven, and to banish all thought of them from my mind." She had, then, no idea of lowly abasement before God.

Some thought they could repent whenever they pleased, and as long as they imagined they could work out this internal process at their own will, their anxiety about their eternal state was not great, for what they judged they could perform at any time they were not alarmed at delaying. Others, brought to see a deep gulf yawning between them and the strait gate, and having disclosed to them the heart corruption which incapacitated them from doing anything towards meriting converting grace, rose in rebellious pride against God, and were in danger of repelling the truth which declared that they must receive eternal life as humble mendicants. Well does Bunyan represent a castle of Beelzebub as being erected opposite the strait gate, and his agents as being stationed on its walls, and projecting their arrows against the pilgrims who are approaching it. Goodwill is said to have pulled Christian in, screening him from these destroying shafts, as if the vicinity of that gate was a place of peculiar peril, and it certainly appeared to be so at this time. Some mistook conviction for conversion, a glow of feeling for real repentance, and there was danger that some sincere enquirers would deviate into a wrong path, and content themselves with some pleasing delusion. I knew cases, at that time, of persons actually so near the portal afford-

ing ingress into the narrow way, that, in the language of our Saviour, they might be said to be entering in, when they were entangled in some pleasing snare and lured back again to the city of destruction; and if this happened in spite of the clear preaching of the word, much more would it have been the case if false peace had been administered.

When awakened sinners did not quench the light of truth, and when they saw that no frames or feelings they might experience in their unrenewed state could lay God under an obligation to show mercy to them, their convictions were soon led into the channel Christ describes when speaking of the Holy Ghost, he says, "He shall reprove the world of sin because they believe not on me." "Never till then," says one, "was I convinced of the sin of unbelief, for I never till then saw that God was offering the unspeakable gift of His dear Son, and that, because I had not received Him, I was rejecting Him all my days. This sin seemed to swallow up all my other sins, and then, when I reflected that in spite of this God was still pressing this precious Saviour on one who had rejected Him, this was too much love, it was irresistible and melted my heart. In the words, 'Whosoever will' (Rev. xxii. 17), I heard my individual call, willingness being the only thing demanded, that

Jesus may in a moment be made mine." "I did not know," says another, "that as long as I neglected the Gospel, I was neglecting Jesus." Thus, when the truths were preached which convinced of sin, transgressors were prepared to welcome the truths which convinced of righteousness. When, according to the imagery of Bunyan, in the Holy War, the red flag was displayed on Mount Justice, it made them willing to look to the white flag waving on Mount Gracious.

CHAPTER VII.

PERSONS AWAKENED BY THE PREACHING OF THE GOSPEL.

"And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her; and the Highest Himself shall establish her."—PSALM lxxxvii. 5.

WE present to the reader a few of the cases which have been forwarded to us of individuals who received saving benefit at this time. They are detailed in the simplest manner and have no startling incidents to embellish them, so that we select only a few cases.

1. Let us speak first of persons awakened under the regular preaching of the gospel.

2. Of persons awakened by occasional remarks dropped in the pulpit.

3. Of persons awakened by remarks made on the psalms which were sung.

A mother of a family, who had led a very thoughtless life up to the year 1840, resolved to go one Sabbath morning to church. The minister of the congregation among whom she presented herself was Mr Stewart, then of the Gaelic chapel, who happened to preach on the duties and obligations of the tenth commandment, and who de-

nounced severely the sin of covetousness. Speaking of the violation of this precept, he said, "To what place will the covetous and discontented go? They will go to hell." These words pierced her heart; she went home and informed her husband of what she had heard, and of the impression produced on her mind, and he replied, "Well, you know, Margaret, you are discontented." Previous to this she had not been a member of any church; she now determined to frequent the house of God regularly, and, hearing of the labours of Mr Burns, she felt a strong desire to hear him preach, although some to whom she announced her purpose dissuaded her from going, alleging that his discourses would drive her to frenzy. Unmoved by such representations, she went to St. Leonard's, saw Mr Milne and Mr Burns together in the pulpit, and was so much affected by the solemnity of the place, and the momentous truths delivered, that she said, "The ministers seemed to her like angels from heaven." Her convictions of sin deepened into awful intensity. Whithersoever she went she felt as if the flames of hell were encircling her, approaching nearer and nearer in girdling fury, as if they would destroy her. This state of mind continued for some time, but as she was constantly hearing of the Saviour's love and finished work, she was enabled at last

to realise Him as stretched on the cross, and dying for her. Permanent peace followed, for she was enabled to roll her sins and cares on Jesus. Through her prayerful instrumentality she saw her husband converted, though he had been long enthralled to the sin of drunkenness. When relating the moral transformation undergone by her husband, she exclaimed, "I cannot say that my two children have been brought into the fold, but I have committed them to the guardianship of the faithful Shepherd, and I believe that, through grace, they will yet be saved."

Sometimes conviction and conversion took place in one night: but this was realised mainly in the case of those who, through the instructions of pious parents or kindred instrumentality, were previously imbued with a certain measure of doctrinal knowledge. We have examined the multifarious papers forwarded to us for the purpose of verifying this point alone, though we have frequently sifted and compared them for other objects, and we have been struck with the importance attached to the labours of parents and faithful ministers who had, previous to their being awakened, imparted to them the seeds of scripture knowledge. When God "went forth" through the city of Perth, the fire came down from heaven, and often in one night lighted a blaze on the altars of

several hearts; and it was then that the labours of those who had piled the wood to prepare for its descent, were seen to be truly useful. They had furnished the souls of those committed to their charge with the materials of knowledge, and the spirit of God came and made them living and operative. These remarks have been suggested by the interval which took place in the history of the woman just mentioned, ere conviction ripened into conversion. The following case exemplifies the observations now made:—

A young man, who had been privileged with the instructions and example of godly parents, had continued altogether indifferent to the concerns of eternity, till one Sabbath evening he was led, in the providence of God, to hear Mr Burns, when he was delivering his message from 2 Cor. v. 20: "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God." He was standing in the dense auditory, having been unable to find a seat; but he became so absorbed in the wondrous truth of the Creator entreating the creature to embrace His overtures of mercy that he never thought of bodily inconvenience. That night he passed from death to life, as the incidents of his subsequent history abundantly proved, and he became remarkable for the depth of his piety. He conducted prayer meetings with success, and was urgent in pressing

souls to repair to Jesus. In January 1841 he addressed a communication to Mr Burns, in which he said: "You may remember preaching in St. Paul's from the text—'We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God.' I was present, but unreconciled unto God; yet the subject was blessed to me, for that very evening, before the Amen was pronounced, I could say I was at peace with God. Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, this judgment was not rash or inconsiderate, for I have found the Lord has dealt bountifully with me. Often, when I have been overpowered with the calumnies of a wicked world, the words 'Fear not' were brought to mind by the Spirit with power." He rapidly advanced through the successive stages of the Christian life, and was anxious to dedicate his energies more directly to the service of God than he could do in the toils of a secular calling. After mature deliberation he resolved to give himself to be a missionary to the Jews, and, while he was applying his mind to secure the requisite qualifications, God suddenly summoned him to glory, transferring his services from the sanctuary below to the sanctuary above.

I conversed one day with a most respectable woman, who was then living in the neighbourhood of Perth, and who told me that for years she had been depressed, almost to the verge of despair, by

a pungent consciousness of sin, and could not see how her transgressions could be pardoned. She heard some remarks made in St. Leonard's on Psalm li. 1, where David gives utterance to an expanded view both of the immensity of his transgression and of God's pardoning love. The words "The multitude of His tender mercies," were dwelt upon. It was said, if we have sins, God has not only mercy, but mercies; if we have great sins, He has tender mercies; if we have a multitude of great sins, He has a multitude of tender mercies. The sinner was ordered to range the multitude of his great sins against the multitude of God's tender mercies, and to see that the amplitude of forgiving love was more than commensurate with the amount of his guilt. The woman told me she had long brooded over the multiplicity and magnitude of her sins, till, on each review, they seemed so to swell in their dimensions as to frown away all hope; but when she returned to her abode that night she saw God's mercies enlarging to still greater dimensions. She saw there was a length and breadth and height and depth of bleeding compassion in his bosom, enough for the most formidable proportions of her sins; she then threw herself on the mercy of God in Christ, and awoke from the paralysing hopelessness of years.

Individuals were often struck by the exposition

of passages describing the lineaments and peculiarities of the new creature, as portraying something different from what they had ever realised. They were similarly moved by a delineation of the privileges and enjoyments of God's people, as depicting something to which they were strangers.

In traversing a foreign country we might not understand a word of the tongue in which its inhabitants interchanged their feelings and sentiments; but we might be convinced that, whilst it was very different from our vernacular speech, those speaking it understood it, and made it the vehicle of their converse. In like manner, when some unregenerate men entered the sanctuary of St. Leonard's, and heard the speech of Canaan uttered, they became convinced there was a language of saints, to which they were strangers, and trembled at their ignorance of saving things.

A mother and five daughters were visited with drops of the refreshing shower in connection with the preaching of the Gospel. At the time when the meetings for prayer and the unfolding of divine truth commenced, the mother was confined with cold, and could not have attended them even though her inclination had prompted. She strove hard to prevent her daughters from frequenting them, that they might not desert their domestic avocations, and lose opportunities of augmenting

their temporal substance. One day she was persuaded to be present in St. Leonard's herself; and, after returning home, she showed much interest in eternal realities. At the hour of the next meeting, she said: "Run down to the kirk; I never, till now, understood what my mother used to preach to me." On being asked a little while after this whether she had undergone a saving change, she replied: "I never till now lost my grip" (*i.e.*, hold) "of the world." She has enjoyed since that period much of the peace which passeth all understanding. Some of her daughters were aroused from their carnal apathy at the same time with their mother, and they now walk in the fear of the Lord and the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

The Word produced a leavening influence on persons of all ages, and not the least upon some whose pilgrimage had reached a very extended term. The case of a woman, eighty years old, who became imbued with saving conviction, was brought under the notice of several, owing to the following occurrence:—A lady, who was going to attend church in St. Leonard's, one week-day forenoon, during the prevalence of wintry weather, met her, bent with age, feeble, and tottering, and unable to cross a piece of ice which lay in her path, and over which a number of boys were sliding. She addressed the lady, saying: "Oh, if I could

only get over this to the kirk!" It was found that up till that time she had been a respectable but worldly woman, and unconcerned about the state of her soul; but this was the time of her espousals to Christ, and she continued a consistent believer up to the time of her death, which took place eight years afterwards.

God's Word was then accounted by many as more than their necessary food: it was sweeter than honey, even honey dropping from the comb. It seemed strange to many that persons earning their bread by the sweat of their brow should be able to attend meetings for prayer and the proclamation of divine truth from night to night; but many will remember through eternity the alacrity with which they accomplished their secular tasks to travel some miles, and then attend the sanctuary. After being jaded with the laborious avocations of the day, it was refreshing to bathe their weary souls in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; and they were thus invigorated with new joy and energy, in spite of the toils of a mechanical employment, and the fatigue of walking several miles.

People were unwilling to go away from the house of God even after prolonged meetings. Friends, reputation, situations, and even life itself, were regarded as unworthy of consideration com-

pared with their being found in Christ. Many trembled lest their impressions should die away, and they should settle into indifference; and they felt a determination that, come what will, they would seek Christ. "We felt," said one, "we must be saved now, or we might never be saved. Everything was swallowed up in the view of eternity, and in the thought of our being a sinner out of Christ."

CHAPTER VIII.

PERSONS AWAKENED BY CASUAL REMARKS MADE FROM THE PULPIT OR AFTER RELIGIOUS SERVICES WERE OVER.

"The word of God is quick and powerful."—HEB. iv. 12.

A YOUNG woman, residing in the vicinity of Perth, was engaged at her work when a person was describing the wonderful impression which the Gospel had recently produced at Kilsyth, and specifying this fact as an exemplification of it, that, after religious services were concluded, the people remained in church, as if unable to sever themselves from its hallowed enclosures. She felt a great desire to see the young minister, who had been honoured of God in producing so strange an effect on the minds of men. The first time she listened to him she was not particularly impressed by the sermon; but, as he was descending the pulpit stairs, he said to the retiring multitudes, "Take heed the devil does not rob you." This remark smote her with sudden concern; but, though it induced her to attend the meetings as often as her occupations permitted, she

was not as yet savingly enlightened. She saw some disquieted with deep anxiety about their souls; but she tranquillised her conscience with the reflection that such persons may have been previously ignorant of God, and never have heard the truths propounded in St. Leonard's. She thought she needed nothing like a work of conversion to be produced in her soul. The time when she found Christ was when Mr Burns preached on 2 Cor. v. 21: "For He hath made Him to be sin for us who knew no sin." In the course of the sermon he remarked "that the transgressor must get a true view of his sins, and bring them all to Christ, and give them to Him, receiving from Him in exchange His righteousness; and that, if they had never gone through a transaction like this, they were not believers." This thrilled her mind with conviction; she felt she had never passed through experience like this, nor dealt with God about her soul's concerns in this direct and immediate manner. A sense of her mental blindness came upon her. In taking a retrospect of her life, her sins arose in terrible perspective before her; but whilst she saw them in their multitudinous array, gathering round her, and each threatening her ruin, the minister went on to describe the willingness of God to take from each sinner his dreadful load, and hand over in exchange for it the

glorious merits of Christ. Though groaning under the prodigious mass of iniquity with which she was charged, she could not resist the call to transfer them to Jesus. Such convincing power seemed to go along with the persuasive offer that she delivered her burdens to Jesus, and felt relieved and cheered. From that time forward, she says, she understood the need of the Spirit's work to illuminate the soul and draw her to the Saviour; but previous to this she never understood conversion to be such a work as demanded His interposition, though she had sat under a faithful Gospel ministry. After this she felt a quickening of the spirit, to which she had been previously a stranger; and the Word dwelt in her so richly that she felt it easy to speak in a suitable way to the souls of others; and in a prayer meeting in her mother's house, where anxious souls met, she was useful to many.

A remark made by Mr Bonar of Collace, now of Glasgow, affected many: "We must get our eye fixed on the Sun of Righteousness. The more we look at Him, the more lovely will He appear; till our sight be so dazzled that we can see nothing else. Oh that we could get such a glimpse!"

It was wonderful, at a time when the turpitude of men's ingratitude was brought home to them, what a penetrating impression was produced by a

melting exhibition of God's love. At the dispensation of the Lord's Supper, during these days of the right hand of the Most High, Mr Milne was about to distribute the sacramental elements, when he said: "May God make you as willing to receive Christ as I am to put this bread and wine into your hands." "These words," says a pious Christian, "were blessed to many, and one soul at least was brought into Gospel liberty."

CHAPTER IX.

PERSONS AWAKENED BY REMARKS MADE ON THE PSALMS WHICH WERE SUNG.

"Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way, and while He opened to us the Scriptures?"—LUKE xxiv. 32.

A WOMAN, who statedly attended ordinances in a country parish, was advised to avail herself of the ministrations going forward in St. Leonard's. After some time she complied with this counsel, and, on entering the church, was much struck with the remarks which Mr Milne made on Psalm xviii. 1, 2—

"Thee will I love, O Lord, my strength.
My fortress is the Lord,
My rock, and He that doth to me
Deliverance afford."

Mr Milne remarked that the language used in this psalm was personal and appropriating—My rock, my strength, and added that they who could not employ such phrases should not unite in singing this psalm. This remark came home to the woman with power, as she had often, like others, joined in the praises of God in the church, without attending

to the meaning of the words which she professed to breathe in praise, and without even conceiving any definite aim in the exercise in which she engaged. The rest of the services deepened the impression then produced : from that time she attended regularly the religious exercises conducted in the sanctuary of St. Leonard's, and sought salvation with the ardour of one who knew she was destitute of its blessings. She felt deeply some expositions which were made one day on a part of the Song of Solomon. She panted to get into the King's chambers, which had been described, and longed to know the interior experiences which God's people enjoy; and in due time the Saviour came to her as a quickening Spirit. She acquired deep views of the enormity of sin, and of the freeness of the Saviour's love, and the intrinsic glory of his expiation, and ran into the clefts of the rock, which she had heard delineated, to enjoy its inviolable security, and to regale herself with the honey stored up in it.

Mrs P. was living in the vicinity of Perth, when God visited her soul through the instrumentality of Mr Burns. A near relation of hers had been led to deep spiritual concern during the awakening which had taken place in the city; and after he had learned the value of his own soul, he was inflamed with anxiety for the well-being of others,

and especially for that of his sister, to whom he was tenderly attached. He addressed to her several letters on the concerns of eternity, and they were instrumental in preparing her mind for the change which afterwards took place. One thing which he sought especially to impress on her was that, in going to hear Mr Burns, she should go, not seeking to hear man but God, and the caution thus administered helped to bring her into a frame of mind like that of Cornelius, when he said: "Now, therefore, are we all here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God" (Acts x. 33). The first time she heard Mr Burns preach she walked fifteen miles to enjoy that privilege; but no special impression was produced upon her mind. Soon after this she went to St. Leonard's, and was much arrested during the reading of the 132d Psalm, which was enlivened with a short exposition before the congregation joined in singing a part of it. Some observations were made on the words—

> "We'll go into His tabernacles,
> And at His footstool bow,"

which mightily arrested her attention. It was remarked that "many went up to God's tabernacle without thinking whither they were going, or what they were doing, or what they had come for." These words came home to her heart,

for she felt she had often gone to church without considering what exercises she was to be employed in, and far less intending to bow before God's footstool. They seemed to describe her case as accurately as if they had been uttered expressly for that purpose; and she felt as if God were saying, "Thou art the man." The following Sabbath she heard Mr Burns preach on Hosea ii. 19 —"I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies;" but she thought the subject was unsuitable to her immature stage of spiritual experience, as detailing exercises of soul to which she had been a stranger, but in due time she found peace. A real and saving change took place in her soul, which was attested by her Christian character. Christ became the object of her admiring regards, and in comparison of Him every sublunary object was eclipsed in her estimation. She showed the supports which the Scriptures supply during the course of a holy life, and especially during a severe and prolonged illness which took place a few years after the occurrences sketched in this brief narrative. At her death her friends cherished an unwavering confidence, founded upon all they had seen and known of her, that her spirit had passed into that "land of pure delight, where saints immortal reign."

CHAPTER X.

PERSONS AWAKENED DURING PUBLIC PRAYERS, OR DURING THE READING OF GOD'S WORD.

"The entrance of Thy words giveth light."—PSALMS cxix. 130.

SOME were smitten with conviction during the prayer, not only from witnessing the breathless awe which pervaded the audience, but under an impression kindled in them by the sentiments and ideas uttered in the exercises of supplication; as if they were suddenly rapt into God's presence and sisted at His bar. Referring to one forenoon when Mr Burns conducted the devotions of the congregation, a woman who was present writes as follows: "He was very copious in the confession of sin, summing up a long train of penitential effusion in the language of the Psalmist—'We are foolish and ignorant, and as beasts before thee,'" adding that, even when confessing sin, we know nothing of its enormity, or of the wrath of God due to it, and that we know far less of the remedy. He confessed our ignorance of Christ as a prophet, priest, and king; and prayed that God might so enlighten

us that we might make a daily use of Him in all these offices, and especially of His atoning merits, so as to know fully and experimentally this truth, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. ix. 14). She adds that "when listening to a prayer so deeply tinctured with a sense of sin's loathsomeness, and so rich on the fulness of Christ's merits, she felt as if he had just emerged from his closet, where he had been washing his sin-stained garments, and had succeeded in making them white in the blood of the Lamb."

Much assistance was given by the Spirit of God at this time, enabling ministers to unbosom the soul in full confession, and to make application to the blood of sprinkling.

A man and his wife, who lived in the neighbourhood of Perth, had gone into town on the evening of the Queen's birthday to witness an exhibition of fireworks; but, in consequence of something going wrong with the pyrotechnic apparatus, it could not take place. They, therefore, resolved to go home, but, passing St. Leonard's Church, in which the illuminated windows indicated that sacred exercises were going on, they were actuated by a feeling of curiosity to enter. The house was,

as usual, crowded in every part, all standing in solemn silence while Mr Burns was praying with vehement importunity for the Queen. Both the man and his wife were struck with awe at the prayer, as discovering immediate and solemn transacting with God, and at the breathless silence reigning over so large and hushed an auditory; and both were, that evening, arrested in their course of worldliness. They were led to a full inspection of their hearts, and to a survey of the sins of their past lives, and felt as if by their offences they had crucified the Lord of Glory.

During these days of the right hand of the most High, it would sometimes happen that the mere reading of the text would shake to pieces a false and delusive confidence in the case of persons who seemed impregnably fortified against any successful assault. A young man who was led to Christ during the Revival, and who had been distinguished by a moral and respectable exterior, found, during the reading of the text given out on one occasion, viz., "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17), that he had been beguiled by the deceitfulness of self-righteousness. He declared from his own experience that this was the most lulling and insidious of all delusions; and that persons graced by a correct external deportment were, when frequenting divine ordinances, peculiarly

liable to yield to self-complacency, and therefore to sink into a helpless condition, from which they are less likely to be roused than the open profligate. Though he was plunged in that imperturbable composure which self-righteousness engenders, he was led, during the reading of the above-mentioned verse, to examine the state of his soul, and to compare his case with the statement which it utters regarding believers, and to inquire whether he had ever realised such spiritual experience as would imply a change of such magnitude as might authorize him to call himself a new creature. "Has anything," he asked himself, "taken place in my history of such importance as to correspond with the description contained in that text? I fear not, and yet it is said it must pass over every one who is in Christ; therefore, I am not in Christ, since I have no reason to pronounce myself a new creature."

A remark subsequently made in St. Leonard's Church, that persons may sit and hear sermons from the day of their birth till the day of their death without any saving effect, struck him as coinciding with what he saw to be his own condition. His false dependence was now cut off—"he was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and he died." It was not till after a considerable interval that he

gained peace through Jesus; but at length he was led to see the completeness of the Saviour's work as a ground of acceptance, and rested in His salvation. In the glow of his first love he determined to seek the salvation of his friends, and particularly of one very dear to him, to whom he wrote long letters unfolding the ruin of the Fall and the need of redemption through Christ; and this prepared the way for a blessed change which took place in her through the instrumentality of the preaching which she heard in St. Leonard's. Her triumphant death a few years afterwards formed a blessed termination to a life and walk of faith; her graces were evolved in full maturity and captivating sweetness during a severe and protracted illness, in which she could say: "The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock," and in which she showed to all around the reality of her faith.

Let none be surprised when it is said that the mere reading of a text, seconded by the demonstration of the Spirit, should dissolve that spell of self-complacency and enchantment in which self-righteousness had bound him. At this time a glory so great seemed to stream from the pages of Scripture that sometimes volumes of meaning would seem to lodge in one word; and inquirers or converts would at times remain entranced with the vastness of import which one verse or one word

conveyed, and dwell absorbed with it for a season, unable to advance to the contemplation of any other portion of divine truth. What a world of meaning was the solitary word "Mary" fraught with, which Christ uttered at the sepulchre to her out of whom He had cast seven devils! It told her that her Master, whom she mourned as dead, was alive, and that, as a conqueror, He had burst the bonds of the grave. There was a love in the accents pronouncing her name, which reminded her of His past condescension, and of a compassion which He had displayed towards her passing the love of woman. All the sweet intercourse she had enjoyed with Him recurred with gushing tenderness to her bosom. The word "Mary" reminded her of the voice which had expelled from her the seven devils, and told her of many other deliverances. And at this time in Perth each short promise seemed pregnant with worlds of meaning. Believers would linger over a sentence or a word as a bee lingers in a flower whose nectary is unusually rich with honey.

This fact is in harmony with what President Edwards represents as a characteristic feature of a time of kindred blessing in America. In the detail given of the remarkable and sublime experience of his wife, she says: "Sometimes the sufficiency and faithfulness of God as the covenant

God of His people appeared in the words—'I am that I am,' in so affecting a manner as to overcome the body. Only mentioning the word 'Comforter' has immediately taken away all strength: that word seemed great enough to fill heaven and earth."

It is not wonderful, then, that the mere reading of God's Word, without any commentary at all, should at this time have produced a great sensation through the crowded and melted audiences at St. Leonard's. One day the 52d Paraphrase was read, in which the condescension and love of the Saviour are painted in such glowing terms; and when the words—

> "His greatness He for us abased,
> For us His glory vailed,"

were pronounced, a woman, overpowered with a sense of His stooping compassion, fainted. She said afterwards: "Oh, it is an awful sight to see the Son of God emptying Himself of His glory for such creatures of the dust."

One ingredient in the power with which Scripture language was invested arose from its being regarded as the immediate utterance of Jehovah Himself. Some who came expecting to reap benefit or amusement by hearing man often felt, after two or three words were pronounced from the

pulpit and seconded by the demonstration of the Holy Ghost, as if they had been summoned into the presence of God, and were listening to warnings and invitations emanating from His own lips. It was as if, when John saw Christ walking in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, some disciples had been present, and he had said to them, "Behold the Lamb of God;" and the persons whom he addressed had looked for the first time on the hallowed circle where Christ, with a countenance "like the sun shining in its strength," was walking, when the voice and presence of man would be forgotten in the all-absorbing glory of the Redeemer. Or it was as when the boy Samuel thought he heard Eli calling him during the night, and sprung up from the couch of repose to obey his commands, when he was informed that the voice which addressed him was that of God, not of man. He then lay down in reverential awe to listen to the address, and to receive the mandates of the august Jehovah. One awakened sinner said, "The Lord led me so much past ministers that it never occurred to me I had to hear man at all. The language of my soul was, I will hear what God the Lord will speak. I felt as if the words came directly from Christ Himself. Let the stars disappear before the glorious Sun of Righteousness."

The Word of God, whether commented on by ministers or read without any exposition, was fraught with a force and significancy which affected the energies of the whole soul. One woman says: "This was the time when I first began to feel myself a lost sinner. Before this I was for years so thoughtless and careless that, although I attended the church regularly, I could not remember one text on which I ever heard a minister preach. My custom was to sleep in the church, and sometimes to weary till the sermon was done; but now ten years have gone round, and I have never felt inclined to sleep in the church since that time."

CHAPTER XI.

THE REVIVAL QUICKENS GOD'S OWN PEOPLE.

"And the eyes of them that see shall not be dim: and the ears of them that hear shall hearken."—ISAIAH xxxii. 3.

THIS period was marked, not only by the bringing in of new converts to the fold, but by a quickening into fresh activity of many believers. They attained new views of the reality of eternal things, of the evil of sin, and of the depths of redeeming love; and this issued in greater fruitfulness in the ways of holiness. One individual says, "Though I cannot date from this season the first implantation of the Divine life which took place when I was receiving instructions from a pious teacher, I could not pronounce with anything like assurance that I was a child of God; but at this season of Divine power I could not consent to remain in a state of uncertainty about my spiritual condition. I could not rest without making sure whether I was a child of God or not." It was then that she had a deeper discovery than before of the evil of her own heart; she experienced more stinging convictions of sin, greater alarm and distress, but a more tranquil

peace followed, and she became a useful member of the church of Christ.

Another believer says: "She felt at this time a reality and power in Divine things such as she never knew before, and could say, 'I saw the goings of the Lord in the sanctuary.'" After this a deep process of conviction began, which lasted for two years. She became a Christian of much experience, and was remarked as exemplifying a much closer walk with God than before.

"Many who had been previously believers," says one, "saw eternal things revealed to the eye of faith as never happened before, and felt much of the powers of the world to come; they saw more of their vileness and blackness, and, being laid in the dust by the Holy Spirit, saw Jesus revealed as more lovely and glorious; there appeared evidence of union to Him; assurance became bright." They were stirred up to pray much for the unconverted; there was much speaking and writing to friends on spiritual matters. Some became much more enlightened in the knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity, and ascertained that their acquaintance with Divine truth had been very defective. Let us specify a case of a woman in which this was strikingly exemplified. She had been impressed, relates a friend of hers, when hearing the sermon preached by Mr Burns on Deut. xxxii. 35: "Their

foot shall slide in due time," and by a remark, previously referred to, about sinners hanging by an attenuated thread over hell, and yet striking at the hand that held them. It was added by the minister, "Do any seek salvation? let them fly underneath the covert." Along with a sister, she sometimes went to visit Mr Burns, and one day expressing great anxiety for nearness to Christ, he said to her, "If you are seeking Christ, He is still more earnestly seeking after you; if you are anxious to find Christ, He is still more anxious to find you." These words went to her heart, and from that moment she attained a degree of peace to which she had been previously a stranger. She had hitherto been fettered by contracted views of the love of God, of the freeness of the Gospel offer, and of the way of a sinner's justification; but from this period she attained more enlarged discoveries of the whole counsel of God, and the visible languor which had weakened her Christianity disappeared. Her husband soon after this was embued with spiritual life.

Believers were accustomed to specify the religious exercises of one remarkable day which signalised this season of spiritual visitation as having contributed powerfully to deepen their impressions of heavenly things, to deliver them from the encroachments of wordly-mindedness, and to speed their

progress to the haven of immortality. That the convictions of those who thronged St. Leonard's might not expire in ineffectual resolutions, becoming like the morning cloud or the early dew, it was arranged that a particular day should be appropriated to fasting and prayer, and that on it each individual should give himself to God in extraordinary self-dedication, with renunciation of the world, and resignation of every power and talent to God. That season was punctiliously observed, and proved useful to believers as well as to awakened sinners. Many of the former, who had been too much fascinated previously by the flattering illusions of time, felt thenceforward as if the realities of eternity now filled the whole field of their vision, so that all that is alluring and all that is terrible on earth dwindled down to insignificance.

Mr Burns preached on Psalm xxxi. 5: "Into Thine hand I commit my spirit." "He showed," says a hearer, "the nature and privilege of thus committing the soul to God, and consecrating our all to Him, and that every person should enter thus solemnly into covenant with God. Sitting down for some time, all was silence in order that we might individually engage in the blessed exercise; it was altogether a most devout and hallowed occasion." Another hearer says: "The presence of God was that day in his temple; the minister pressed the

duty of each transacting personally with God alone, yielding himself up to Him; he said, 'Pause and speak in the retirement of your own hearts, and in silence; do this each for himself, and commit yourselves to God.' There ensued a profound stillness in the audience; their minds were thrown back upon themselves; some felt their aversion to transact with God, and yet were compelled to transact with Him. Some, feeling that those around them were transacting with God, and aware they were incapable of such an exercise, were forced to say, 'Surely I am dead in tresspasses and sins.'"

It is agreed upon by all competent witnesses, as to the results of the solemn exercises of that day, that great growth in grace was realised by believers, while convinced sinners, who halted between two opinions, were compelled to decide for Christ. The injunction given to the congregation to plead with God while the delivery of the Divine message was suspended, was practised occasionally during this memorable period, not as the result of any concerted plan, but from the impulse of immediate feeling. This was done at times when the Gospel was presented in all its expanding freeness, when the proclaimer of the message and most of its hearers felt as if they were bound to yield an instantaneous compliance with its invigorating offers. Some of the audience would, after the love of the Saviour

was pressed on them with its amplitude of pardoning grace, feel as if they wished the voice of man to be hushed, and nothing to interpose between them and Christ, that they might follow up the offer by an immediate surrender to God; and, indeed, speaker and hearer sometimes had a strong impulse to cease their dealings with each other, that both parties might deal with God.

On one occasion, when a minister was exhibiting the impregnable security and the glorious privilege of being in the Rock—Christ, and a melting softness had spread over the congregation, he urged them to repair to that Rock, to share the asylum which it afforded, and feast on the treasures lodged in it; and, swayed by an uncontrollable desire to urge them to an instant decision, he said, "I pause for a moment, that all may go into the Rock—Christ." Instantly every head was down, souls prayed that the power of the Spirit might give them ingress into the clefts of the smitten Rock; and they, who had been previously regaled with its stores of honey, sought to taste them in larger measure than before. One individual who was present said, she was unable, at that time, to resign her soul to Christ, but was agonized with the reflection that others were hastening into the Rock, while, in impenitent obstinacy, she was lingering without; and she was penetrated with a new

view of the blackness of the heart which could resist an invitation of such boundless welcome.

It might be inappropriate to make such pauses in the stated services of the sanctuary, or to adopt, as a deliberate and ordinary proceeding, what was suggested by the immediate consciousness that God Himself was passing before the Rock, ready to receive into its cavities any sinner who would approach.

An evening on which good people felt a fresh and quickening impulse was often referred to afterwards.

Mr Milne preached from the parable of the ten virgins, and much power and blessing attended his exposition of that portion of God's word. Deep and thrilling conviction was produced by one remark: "If the wise virgins had kept their lamps trimmed and remained awake, as they ought to have done, the foolish virgins would not have been allowed to fall asleep; they might then have discovered the deficiency of their oil, and have gone to procure a supply before the Bridegroom had come." Many became alarmed lest their slumbering state might have been the cause of sinners having been allowed to sleep on to their ruin; they dreaded that they had thus been soul murderers, and had reason to cry out: "Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; and my

tongue shall sing aloud of Thy righteousness;" and they felt a deep persuasion that, if they were not to go on ruining souls, they must awake to new eagerness in serving their Saviour.

In surveying the agricultural operations carried on for rendering the soil fruitful, we see the ordinary plough used for turning and exposing it to the frost in winter and to the sun and atmosphere in summer; but this is not enough for extracting from every field its full vegetable produce. Deep ploughing accords with the best husbandry where the state and qualities of the soil are suitable, and we sometimes see a trench or subsoil plough of great strength brought into requisition. It penetrates deep into the soil, and stirs it below the bottom of the usual furrow; we see it following after the common plough, throwing up fresh mould whose substance has not been exhausted in bearing any crops, and the land is thus enriched with more exuberant fertility. Now, at this time many believers in Perth were racked with deeper convictions of sin than they had ever previously experienced; they saw how little the great principles of the Gospel had been embodied in their conduct, how little they had been actuated and guided by the great motive of glorifying God; and, especially, how little they had laboured to forward and maintain the cause of Christ and truth in the world.

They were overwhelmed with the retrospect of their past unprofitableness, and, laving themselves in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, they implored grace to be useful in the spheres of action which God had assigned them, and to be enabled so to make their light shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, might glorify their Father who is in Heaven. From this time many became more fruitful in the ways of holiness, and sought nearer approaches to Christ, so that some who barely saw the skirts of His Majesty, now looked habitually on the King's face. And if there was one element of fruitfulness more than another in which the deep ploughing of the soil of their hearts, or startling convictions of their past barrenness issued, it was in energetic exertion for the good of others.

CHAPTER XII.

CONVERTS GOING FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

"They go from strength to strength."—PSALM lxxxiv. 7.

IN the month of April, 1840, Mr Burns considered it his duty to go to Aberdeen to preach the word, and then the meetings maintained in St. Leonard's for several months came to a close. A sermon which had been preached by Mr Andrew Bonar of Collace, now of Finnieston, during the progress of the revival in Perth, was now brought to the vivid recollection of many. The subject of it was Philip and the Ethiopian treasurer. He had remarked that the latter went on his way rejoicing, even after Philip had been snatched away from him, that this proved his joy did not rest on Philip but the Saviour, and that if they wished lasting peace, they must rest not on ministers, but on Christ. This was eminently verified in the case of multitudes; they had found Him "who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;" and, standing on the Rock, they could sing when he, who had been the chief instrument of helping them on to it, had withdrawn.

The Spirit still continued after the departure of Mr Burns to heap fresh blessings on the congregation of St. Leonard's under the ministrations of Mr Milne their pastor. The latter went on preaching with an unction, fervour, and affection, which betokened the energy of that Divine Agent; and such power accompanied his labours, that seldom did any long interval elapse during which obdurate sinners were not sinking under the weapons of his holy warfare.

During the progress of the work, and long after the great shower had fallen, peculiar tenderness of conscience pervaded the congregation, and a fear of driving God away by any carelessness of life and conversation. When Jehovah was walking in the midst of them, they felt it peculiarly necessary for them to recoil from the contact of all iniquity, lest He should be grieved away. Dr Owen, in speaking of the offence which Moses and Aaron committed at Meribah Kadesh, and by which they incurred exclusion from the promised land, says, "Believers, who are admitted to very intimate communion with God, and highly honoured of Him, like Moses, often provoke Him by their transgressions and backslidings to abridge the term of their pilgrimage, and to cut them off in his anger." It was necessary for God's people in Perth to maintain a deportment suited to the character of the "Spirit of holi-

ness," when Christ was present holding in His hand the seal of the living God, and stamping on the souls and foreheads of many that mark by which they were to be recognised as His followers on the day of final reckoning; it was felt it would be requiting Him with base ingratitude to cling to any accursed thing which might vex His holy Spirit, and make Him turn to be their enemy. And not only was it necessary to flee from everything which might scare away the Holy Dove, who was spreading His wings over Perth; it was considered an imperious duty to comply with His dictates in every particular, and especially by labouring in the use of appropriate outward means, and wrestling in secret and social prayer, for the salvation of others. It was felt by believers they would in a great measure neglect to profit by the season of sacred visitation if they did not sigh and cry for the prevailing ungodliness of the land; and the sentiment was re-echoed which Samuel uttered, when the Israelites, who had discarded him in his old age, solicited, under the impulse of terror, his intercession with God, and when he replied: "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (1 Sam. xii. 23). Particular individuals, or groups of converts, availing themselves of the gales of the Spirit, travailed in supplication with unwearied assiduity for the conversion of others, and

at times extended their devotional exercises far into the watches of the night.

The revival at Perth was exempted from one great evil incident to that of Kilsyth. We had not there ministers and people flocking from all quarters to converse with those awakened to impressions of their guilt and danger, and marring the work of the Lord by ministering to their self-complacency and pride. They who occupy the pulpit at such emergencies would require to dwell on those topics which are adapted to the condition of the hearers; and, therefore, any old sermon brought out at random and preached, was not fitted to alarm and illuminate inquiring sinners.

It must not be disguised that during the revival many evils threatened to vitiate the work of the Lord. The germs appeared of almost every pernicious element of which President Edwards complains as disfiguring the time of spiritual manifestation in Northampton, though, from the precautions which were used, few reached their development. After a shower of the Spirit falls on the garden of the Lord, weeds spring up as well as the plants which our Father in Heaven has planted, and the labourers who cultivate it should seek to extirpate the one class of productions while they cherish the other. Much discretion is required in conducting a revival, so as to bring out from it all the good which may

be educed, and to repress the growth of evil. Paul says, "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil," implying that persons, in whom the formation of the Divine life is recent, are liable to ebullitions of pride.

Some servants, in whom the Spirit seemed to have wrought a real change of heart, and others who were merely agitated by the distress and alarm which natural conscience, when stung by the preaching of the Word, can create, were so elated by their real or supposed spiritual experience, that, like Hagar, who gloried over Sarah when she appeared the destined mother of the promised seed, they were disposed to triumph over such of their mistresses as seemed estranged from God, and with an air of conscious superiority, to tell them of their exposure to external wrath, and their ignorance of eternal things. It was felt to be of great importance to teach them, that, by increased fidelity in their stations, they should attract the notice of their employers to the principles of the Gospel, rather than by lecturing them about their "walking according to the course of this world," and to show them how considerable a portion of Scripture is occupied in detailing the duties of servants, and that by the vigilant discharge of these they might adorn the doctrine of their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, though it cannot be denied that the impressions of several wore away, though the delusive glare of earthly things regained its hold over some, and others returned to the haunts of profligacy, nothing has ever occurred to shake the conviction that the arm of the Lord was gloriously revealed in Perth at this time. It may seem rash to hazard any confident statement as to the numerical proportion between those who fell away and those who held fast their integrity, but from a considerable personal acquaintance with the facts of the case, and from much conversation with those whose opportunities of knowledge were better than mine, I may express my deliberately formed conviction that three-fourths of those in whom the elements of the Divine life seemed to have been implanted, produced "that fruit unto holiness whose end is Eternal Life."

"Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee?"—PSALM lxxxv. 6.

II. Some Incidents connected with the Revival in Dundee,

DURING THE YEARS 1839 AND 1840.

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."—PSALM lxxxvii. 3.

BEFORE presenting an interesting case, illustrative of the Lord's work in St. Peter's, Dundee, let it be noticed that the sanctuary where the goings of the King were witnessed, was one of the Church Extension fabrics erected in connection with Dr Chalmers' great movement to bring the ordinances of the Gospel within the reach of our neglected and heathen population. Dr Roxburgh, of our Home Mission Committee, was then a minister in Dundee, and entered with great promptitude and energy into this philanthropic enterprise. Through his exertions the church of St. Peter's was reared, and immediately, as if to encourage His servants in providing religious accommodation for the lapsed masses, the pillar of fire took possession of it, filling all its recesses with the glory of the Lord.

He who has conducted the affairs of our Home Mission with the zeal of an apostle and the tact and sagacity of an accomplished man of business, there earned the reward of his first achievement for the neglected masses, and the blessing which visited St. Peter's was a foretaste of the rich showers of the Holy Ghost, which have descended upon the territorial churches over whose interests he has so ably presided.

God sent to St. Peter's a pastor according to His own heart in the late Mr M'Cheyne. During his whole ministry there were droppings from on high, and they increased into a copious flood during his absence in the expedition to the Holy Land in search of God's ancient people. Though separated from his flock, he panted and prayed the more earnestly for the conversion and sanctification of his people. He was, like Moses on the hill, holding up the rod in ceaseless appeal to the Head of the Church in their behalf, while Mr Burns was, like Joshua, toiling in the field of battle, and ministering to his hearers.

At the request of Mr Burns I spent a week in Dundee in November 1839, for the purpose of aiding him during the progress of the revival in St. Peter's. The work which God was there carrying forward, resembled, in its main features, that which afterwards signalised the city of Perth; but it did

not proceed in so quiet a manner. The cries of those impressed were louder, their convictions more thrilling, and the whole aspect of those assembled in church such as to excite the notice of the surrounding community more strongly than in the case of Perth. The intention of God was perhaps to startle the attention of a large population like Dundee, a thing more difficult to be accomplished than in reference to the smaller number of inhabitants in Perth. It cannot be said that more good was done in Dundee than in Perth; but the convictions of sin were more agitating, their inward darkness and struggles before attaining light were more prolonged, so that the cries and disquietude of arrow-stricken souls drew multitudes from every street and alley of a crowded city of 60,000 inhabitants to St. Peter's. It is certain that those on whom a supernatural change was wrought were not confined to the parish of St. Peter's, but belonged to every locality of Dundee, as if it were intended they should be salt impregnating the sinful mass of that manufacturing town, and neutralising the tendencies to moral corruption in every part of it. The work in Perth was like a fertilising river, irrigating the country through which it rolls with a comparatively noiseless current; that of Dundee like a river, not rolling a larger volume of water or

enriching a more ample surface, but possessing striking cataracts and other commanding features of physical interest which attract the notice and visits of travellers.

During the week in November 1839 in which I had the privilege of being in Dundee, I enjoyed the opportunity of being daily present in St. Peter's Church, of preaching and of witnessing the private meetings held for conference and prayer. There were indications of the presence of the Holy One of Israel, in the awe with which the listening multitudes were penetrated, in the patience with which they heard the Word, and the prayerful ardour with which they followed up the exhortations of the pulpit.

Public worship generally commenced at seven o'clock each evening, and at half-past seven or near eight o'clock, when work was suspended at the manufactories, the mills poured forth great numbers into the church, of whom men composed a vast and striking proportion. At the close of the services, on the Monday of the week already mentioned, many remained behind, tossed with uneasy fears about their eternal condition; and after they were addressed, and most of them had retired to their homes, about thirty young men, apparently between twenty and thirty years of age, walked into the session-house, anxious to be

conversed with, and soliciting more prayer that they might get enlargement from the captivity of sin. Mr Burns said to one of them: "What state do you think your soul to be in?" He answered: "I have been looking back upon my past life, and I see that I have been bound hand and foot by Satan all my days, doing whatever he pleased." Another said: "I see I have not only done many evil things, but that my whole nature and faculties have been steeped in pollution." Each of the thirty persons expressed pungent convictions, and then prayer, singing of Psalms, and the exhibition of the terrors and mercies of the Lord followed till a little after eleven o'clock, when, as appeared afterwards, some really found Christ, and the rest had their impressions much deepened.

One of the most interesting features presented by the congregation in St. Peter's was in the number of boys who crowded the pulpit stairs, listening with the most riveted attention, and who remained clinging to their places after the blessing was pronounced, anxious that some word should be addressed to them by the officiating ministers. Mr Burns, one evening gazing at their countenances, pensive with spiritual concern, said, addressing one of them, "How long have you been seeking Christ?" and the answer was: "Two months." Another, in reply to the same question,

said, "Three months;" another said, "Four months." "But how long has God been seeking you?" it was asked. To this question there was no answer; some rather looked surprised, feeling as if the seeking had been all on their side, and as if God had been carrying on no dealings with them about their salvation. Mr Burns then said: "How old are you?" One said, "Thirteen years old;" another, "Fourteen." Then it was said: "God has been seeking you for thirteen or fourteen years, for He has been seeking you all your lives. You wonder He is not instantly answering your prayers, though you have been seeking Him for two or three months; how much more reason has God to wonder that you have paid no attention to His prayers that you would accept of His Son, and be reconciled to Him. Then, addressing them in the style of Bunyan in his "Jerusalem Sinner Saved," he would say, "I am instructed to tell great trangressors, that salvation is provided for them. When you are convicted as great sinners you may feel like a man summoned into court by the judge,—you may say to the crowd between you and him, 'Make way for me, the judge has called me.' Christ is ordering you to come into His presence; you have a right to press through the crowds and difficulties obstructing your way—through Satan's hosts and all opposition. Dear children, shall we

ask Jesus to receive you now?" Oh yes! was the answer,—when praise and prayer were offered in the presence of children, not a few of whom underwent a saving change. Some of them are now uttering Hosannahs in glory, while others, shot up to manhood, are fighting the battles of the Saviour in this world below.

I preached every evening during that week in St. Peter's. It was not intended that I should officiate on the Wednesday, as Mr Burns, who had been preaching somewhere out of Dundee on the Tuesday, was intending to occupy his own pulpit on that evening. Being anxious to attend the meeting, and having been obliged to go out of town in the afternoon, I made a great effort to get back in time, but could not avoid being a little late. When I entered the church the congregation was singing the psalm subsequent to the first prayer; the elder, who stood at the plate, said to me as I entered, "Mr Burns feels quite exhausted to-night, and expects you to take his place." I answered, "This is impossible without any preparation;" but as I advanced along the passage Mr Burns made signals from the pulpit that I should ascend beside him and speak with him. With much reluctance I did so. He pressed his request, and said he was so overwhelmed with fatigue as to be unable to discharge his ministerial functions, and that I must

labour in his stead. I replied that I was unprepared, but the congregation were now singing the last verse of the psalm. Mr Burns said, "Stand up and say something in the strength of God, and if you are not supported, sit down." As he uttered these words, the last line of the Psalm was sung out, and the congregation was hushed in silence and expectation. I stood up and was directed to Zech. iii., and though nothing occurred which had not previously passed through the mind, it was made evident that when God has immortal souls to feed, He can suggest to any minister, however otherwise incompetent, the suitable topics.

A greater solemnity was diffused over the audience than I had yet seen; the stillness became more and more breathless. The speaker, after dilating for more than an hour on the invitations of the Gospel, and the danger of trifling with its provisions, felt impelled to pause for a moment and say, "Let every person now present follow up what has been said by an immediate dedication of himself to God, who is present by His Spirit, to enable sinners to flee from the wrath to come. I shall wait five minutes that every sinner may flee to the waters of the well of Bethlethem, and break through all opposition in his way." Mr Burns, who was sitting behind me in the pulpit, said, "Wait, dear brother, till nine o'clock strikes."

It was at that time seven minutes to nine. I intimated that I would suspend my address till the clock, which was inside the Church, in the front of the gallery opposite the pulpit, should strike nine; and I exhorted the whole audience to deal with God individually, in wrestling importunity, and seek the pardon of their sins and renovation of heart. No one seemed to look back to the clock to ascertain how many minutes it wanted of nine o'clock, but as if there was not time to do this, each person, through the crowded audience, felt the greatest eagerness to find Christ, if not for the first time, yet to get a fresh and more tenacious hold of Him than ever. Each head was bent down in supplication; the stillness deepened into the greatest intensity, and nothing was heard during the brief pause but the machinery of the clock, or some sob or half-stifled sound of those engaged in supplication. Many prayed as if the destinies of eternity were to take their colour and complexion from the transactions of that evening. The clock sounded after seven minutes of unbroken stillness, and each individual was startled as if the short season had passed without its having been adequately improved.

Mr Burns mentioned afterwards that he had come into contact with fifteen individuals who on that night appeared to have passed from death to

life, and no one can tell how many out of a dense auditory, composed of persons residing in Dundee, or belonging to the rural population in its vicinity, may have had a new bias impressed on their character. The impression produced that night, through the power of the Holy Ghost, seemed connected with the persuasion that the audience were not entitled to consider when they would attend to their eternal interests, that God was in Christ ready to reconcile them to Himself, that they were bound to come to an immediate decision as to their accepting the offers of pardon, and that if they quitted the sanctuary without resting on Him as a Saviour, they might go down to eternal despair, as having neglected the great salvation. Many felt that evening they must be saved *then*, or never.

The meetings organised for conference and prayer, which took place after the public exercises were concluded, were much blessed to convinced souls, in leading them to peace and rest in Jesus. In the parable of the Sower it is said, Satan, like the birds of the air, watches for the seed that has been sown; and it often happens that, after a sinner is delivered, he stoops down and catches away the seed by leading the worshippers to frivolous or earthly conversation. And it was when hearers carried out the instructions imparted to them by unabated anxiety about their eternal

interests, and by assiduous prayer, that the seeds deposited in the soil of the heart germinated and sprung up into eternal life.

Many instances might be furnished of persons on whom the Spirit of God savingly wrought in Dundee. One is subjoined, which signally illustrates the nature of the Revival, and is connected with the wonderful days in the ministry of the late Mr M'Cheyne. She had been for a long period in great spiritual distress, sometimes on the very verge of despair, when she came to Dundee early in 1840 to enjoy the benefit of the ministry of Mr M'Cheyne and his fellow-labourers in the work of the Lord.

"Hearing that Mr M'Cheyne was to preach in Wallacetown Church on Sabbath evening," she says in a letter written in 1860, and addressed to myself, "I went to hear him. His subject was 'Ye must be born again' (John iii.). I felt that I had not undergone this change, but it was my cry to God that His Holy Spirit would work this change within me. I thought I never was more earnest than that night for a blessing on the preached word. Every word that came from the preacher's lips seemed as a pointed arrow to my soul. I prayed that I might be enabled to look to the Lamb of God that my sins might be taken away. I would have liked to speak to the minister that night, but came away without doing so. I could get no rest

that night, and rose early to see if I could find out the precious promises he pointed out for us to take home with us. I read much in my Bible for some days, but had not much understanding of it.

"During that week I again heard Mr M'Cheyne preach. His text was in Rev. xiv. 13: 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord.' He stood in front of his own church, and addressed the people in the open air. He spoke much of the happiness of the people of God. I was grieved because of my own wicked heart, and thought surely God was never to save my soul, or it might have been saved before this. The minister held up Christ freely to the unconverted present, and then said, 'If there is a soul here to-day that will perish, you will remember in eternity how freely Christ was offered to you, and you would not receive Him. I will be a swift witness against you myself. The very ground on which you are standing will testify against you. The very grass which you are pressing to the ground with your feet will rise up against you in the day of the Lord.'

"He saw me very much affected, and, when the sermon was over, he came and spoke to me, and asked me to go to his house. I went, and he spoke much to me about my soul. He asked me if I lived in Dundee, and I told him I had come to live there because I had heard of the awakenings that

had taken place in it. He asked me where I came from, and if I had ever told my case to a godly minister. I said I had often conversed with Mr Millar of Clunie. He pointed out portions of the Word of God to me that I might read and pray over. I told him I could take no comfort from the Bible, and had little understanding of it. He prayed with me, and told me he would remember me at the throne of grace. In the course of conversation that night when he saw my unbelief he said, 'Would you be willing to shut that Bible and to say farewell to it, and farewell to the House of God, and farewell to the people of God, and farewell to the means of grace?' I said I would not, for I always wished to be in the House of God, where the way of salvation through Christ is preached. And as for saying farewell to the Bible, that was what I could not do, though many a time I was afraid to open it. He asked me to call upon him soon again.

"On my way home I met a godly woman and told her where I had been. She said, 'Take care, for Satan will allow you to go and speak to godly ministers and to read the Bible and attend all the means of grace, if you will just remain away from Christ.' When I got home I prayed to the Lord for a blessing on the word spoken by Mr M'Cheyne to my soul. I valued him very much for his faith-

fulness to me, but I began to fear I was putting too much trust in man. 'Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm' (Jer. xvii. 5), came to my mind, and for some weeks I thought much on these words.

"I was very anxious to get good to my soul by any instrument, yet I never liked to see any one fill Mr M'Cheyne's pulpit but himself, because he was so faithful in all the duties he was called upon to perform.

"At this time I was very weak and unable to work. I read much in my Bible, and prayed that the Lord would give me His Holy Spirit to enable me to believe His own blessed word. I went to the weekly prayer meeting in St. Peter's, and upon seeing a stranger go up into the pulpit I felt so grieved that I shed tears. The minister, before giving out the Psalm, said, 'Is there a soul here that has come to the House of God without having read a portion of God's Word to-day?' He paused a little, and said, 'Is there a soul come within these walls without prayer to God this evening?' Again he paused, and then said, 'Is there a soul that came within the walls of this church without thinking that they were going to transact with God for eternity? Well, if there is any soul present in such a case, if the grace of God prevent not, all the means of grace you have

ever enjoyed will be as fresh oil pouring upon you in hell.' These words came home with power to my soul, and I was made to see that the fault lay in myself, and not in ministers. I knew that I had not been guilty of what he had mentioned, for I had been reading the word of God that day, and had often been at a throne of grace, but I was in great fear of dying an unpardoned sinner." [Here we interrupt her narrative.]

After sermon Mr M'Cheyne went to the session-house to converse with two or three distressed souls, while I took his place in the church, standing below the precentor's desk. I commenced with prayer, speaking more from the impulse of agonised feelings that throbbed in my own mind, than attempting to frame any petitions suitable to the terror stricken crowd; and in the beginning I said that God might justly take the besom of destruction and sweep over the whole church, driving us all into hell, the destined receptacle of all moral pollution, when, at the words, such rending shrieks arose from many around me, that they shook my whole soul, and made every limb quiver with agitation. Some who conversed with me next day said their impressions of eternal realities were so vivid that night, that, like Moses, "they saw Him who is invisible," and that, when these words were pronounced, they felt as if God, so justly incensed

at their sins, was about to brandish the besom of destruction, and, treating them as mire that could not be touched with the hand, hurry them by one effort into the pit that engulphs the worldly and impure. After prayer I proceeded to address them, and present the offers of mercy; and I noticed the writer of the above recorded statements, and among all who stood before me none had a countenance of such speechless sorrow, and there was none whose body was convulsed with such tremors. I observed an occasional gleam of joy pass over her countenance when any encouraging statements were uttered, but which vanished almost immediately and left her face mantled with a darker gloom.

I said, "Christ who healed the leper is willing to heal you; He, who was not content with healing the leper, while He bowed at some distance from Him breathing his imploring entreaty for a cure, but who walked up to him and touched his leprous sores, is willing to draw near and touch your polluted souls, and bless you. He knows you are at the bottom of a horrible pit and miry clay, too deep for created eye to see, far less for created might to give aid; but He is willing to reach down his everlasting arm to grasp you while immersed in the mire of the pit, and raise you to the rock, and wash you with the streams which issue from it." I observed that the first offers of Christ had the

effect that night of enhancing their anguish. Some said afterwards, "How strange the offer should be so free, while my heart is so hard as to reject it; how strange there should be so much love, and that my cold heart will not embrace it." The individual I have referred to was supported home between two men, the mortal tabernacle being scarcely strong enough to sustain the discoveries of her sinfulness and liability to ruin, which had rushed upon her mind.

In reviewing the transactions of that evening I could not help observing that the minister of St. Peter's, whose heart mirrored so brightly the Divine purity, was much aided in pourtraying the Divine holiness, and, by presenting the beauty of the Divine character, the convictions among his people were deep and solid. But a far greater energy was that night at work than that of man; this I felt, like others, while listening to the preaching of God's servant; and when I succeeded him in addressing the people, and was called upon to stand more directly in the line through which the stream of Divine influence was passing to the congregation, I was convinced that perceptions a little stronger than were then imparted of our nature being defiled throughout, and of lives consisting of an unbroken series of rebellions against God, would make feeble humanity wither and expire.

I remained with Mr M'Cheyne over the next Sabbath, he lecturing in the forenoon on 1 John v., while I preached in the afternoon on the scape-goat that carried our sins into the wilderness. I arranged with him on the following week that he would accompany me to Huntly, one of the parishes of the seven suspended ministers of the Strathbogie Presbytery, where I had been appointed to dispense the Lord's Supper, and aid me in that duty, and preach in that parish for a week. He cheerfully complied; he was deeply interested in the contendings of our church, as intimately linked with the prerogatives of its Divine Head. Though God honoured him in planting many a lily in His garden, he was not so wholly engrossed in that work, as to forget that an attempt was made to destroy the spiritual jurisdiction of our church. We went to Huntly, where his preaching was much blessed. We were both interdicted from preaching in any one of the seven parishes of the Strathbogie Presbytery, and I cannot describe how his bosom laboured with the guilt this country was incurring in permitting its civil courts to encroach on the prerogatives of Christ. After we had discharged our duties in that place, Mr M'Cheyne went to Edinburgh to attend the meeting of the Commission, at which many of the ministers and elders of our church signed the solemn engagement in defence

of our spiritual liberties; and, although the interesting state of his congregation might seem to demand his immediate attention, he was too well aware of the paramount interests involving the whole Church of Scotland, to postpone them to those of his own flock. And I could not help observing, as, in returning from Strathbogie, I conducted the weekly services on the subsequent Thursday, while he was in Edinburgh, that the blessing was increased rather than diminished in spite of his attention to the affairs of the church. I preached on Christ washing the disciples' feet; and it seemed to me that I never had seen the crowded audience so melted with the Gospel; they seemed as if yielding themselves to every impression of the divine word, and as if they could be put in the mould of the Gospel, and receive every stamp it could communicate. After the blessing was pronounced, I went down from the pulpit and stood under the precentor's desk, when many crowded near me. From the narrative of the individual referred to, it appears that the 130th Psalm was sung, and souls who knew what it was to be in the depths, and to cry out of them, sung it with melodious pathos. I then said, "Christ is the day's man standing between God and us to lay his hand on the offended God and the offending creatures. After the Fall, the Father, provoked at the sin of man, turned His back on

this world, as man had turned his back on God; but when Christ stood in the breach, and as Mediator laid His hand on the Father, He turned round and looked with love on this fallen world. But will you not let Christ put His hand on you? and turn your face towards the face of the Father beaming benignantly on you? God the Father is satisfied with Christ's propitiation, and is smiling on the world for His sake. Are you not satisfied with it? and will you not look towards the Father through Him?"

Some showed great agony pictured on their countenances at this time, from the feeling that they could not go to Christ, however freely the provisions of the covenant were presented, and I exclaimed, "Say to Christ, Lord I cannot give my heart to Thee, take it, and make me willing in a day of power; I cannot make my heart worthy of Thine acceptance, but take it, defiled as it is, and cleanse it for Thine own service; I cannot enter into the bonds of the covenant, but do Thou stretch forth Thine hand and put me within them." As these words were uttered, the individual whose narrative is inserted grasped my hand with a strong pressure. I thought it might be some transient feeling or passing excitement; but at that instant, He who said "Let there be light, and there was light," flashed light into her soul, and released her

from the pangs with which her bosom ached : her long tossed vessel got into the haven, and from much conversation which I had with her at that period, and during the last ten years, and from her holy and consistent walk, I cannot doubt but that this was the time of love, when Jesus passed by and said unto her " Live."

I have omitted the part of her narrative which goes over these scenes I have depicted, and now give the conclusion of it. She says—

" Before going home, I told the minister what I felt, and that I was now more happy than I had ever been sorrowful, and he bade me sit down and rest myself in Christ. I went home, but felt so happy, and my step was so light, I scarcely felt the street under me. When I got into the house I took my Bible out and turned up to the 103d Psalm. I cannot describe the joy I felt while reading that Psalm, and this happiness continued with me for a week. After this I began to fear that it was only a temptation of Satan which filled my mind, but I never again had a fear that God would not hear my prayer, nor a fear of coming to read His holy word after what I felt that night in St. Peter's Church. And ever will I praise the Lord for his boundless love and tender mercy towards me in the land of the living, who deserved nothing at His hand, but the reward of all mine iniquities.

From that time everything wore a new aspect in my view. I thought that the very skiés above my head had shared in the same happy frame which I possessed. My mind was so much taken up with spiritual things, that I could take no rest at night. I was so happy for a time that I longed to be removed from earth to heaven, to sing the praises of redeeming love. May the Lord give me grace to be ever living in preparation for that great change, and sooner or later I shall enter into the joy of my Lord, and sing that song of praise which shall never terminate through all eternity. Amen." [Here her narrative ends.]

I had the opportunity, for days in succession, at this time, as well as on other occasions, of conversing with persons oppressed with a sense of sin. I found, with regard to the two nights to which I have more particularly referred, when many seemed so deeply lacerated with the abasing consciousness of their sinfulness, and vented their inward sorrows in moanings and bitter shrieks, that their impressions did not commence then. "Their sore had run in the night, and ceased not" for weeks and months, and now the heavings of mental anguish became insupportable. Right conviction terminated in their seeing the sin of their nature, as well as the more prominent deformities which had stained their lives. Sometimes a recently perpetrated

offence stung them with great agony. A printer's apprentice had sometimes in the evenings, after the hours appointed for labour were over, made use of his master's apparatus secretly to print bills and other papers, and had appropriated the pecuniary gains arising from this to his own purposes; when in the light of eternity he saw the flagrant dishonesty of which he had been guilty, he felt the writhings of the keenest remorse, and was anxious to know whether he should reveal his delinquency to his master, and how he could make reparation for it. Two young women had, on a Sabbath day, crossed in the ferryboat to Newport in Fife, and had spent part of that holy day in recreation and amusement; and now they stood confounded at their impiety in daring to trifle with the instituted means of grace. Sins, which at other times many would have thought venial, seemed then to dilate into their real proportions, and to confront them with the recompense of reward that was due.

If the sense of sin was fearful, most of those who got rest from it made efforts to diffuse the knowledge of Christ's name, and some did so at great personal sacrifices. One young woman, who had accumulated a sufficient sum to purchase what for one in her station was a smart and valuable dress, was so smitten with a sense of the spiritual destitution of the world, as to devote the whole of

this money as a contribution to the Jewish Mission.

It is worthy of notice that the rich shower of the Spirit which diffused such precious blessings in Perth, Dundee, and other places in the land, descended in a time of trying perplexity to our church, viz., soon after the adverse decision of the Court of Session in the Auchterarder case was ratified by the House of Lords. The path of duty was plain, but difficult as it was plain, and the copious effusions of God's Spirit told that He was with us. When Christ constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and cross the sea of Galilee, His injunction was clear and unambiguous; a storm overtook them, but this was no reason for turning round the vessel: they rowed against the stream, though making little progress, till their Master came to them, when He found them still steering in the right direction. The path of duty was plain, but a tempest was coming down, and it was well when many elements were lowering against us, that God by the supernatural effusion of His Spirit said, "I am with you to help you."

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